NEWS / A2

Defensor first to leave
Cabinet to run for Senate, Ermita says

ACROSS / A13

Blame for Ormoc fire
focuses on department store owner, say cops

METRO / A17

Girl, 17, dies after eating
leftover spaghetti; 10 others hospitalized

WORLD / A19

Saddam ordered hanged
in 30 days as Iraq court rejects his appeal

BUSINESS / B1

Peso highest
in 6 years at 49.195 to $1

Ford, only unelected US president, dies at 93

FORD AP

LOS ANGELES—GERALD R. Ford, who picked up the pieces of Richard Nixon's scandal-shattered White House as the 38th and only unelected president in America's history, has died, his wife, Betty, said Tuesday. He was 93.

FORD/ A15

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, December 28, 2006 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 20 P18 website: inquirer.net

Don't lend money today, it's April Fool's, RP style

By INQUIRER Research

ON THIS DAY, THINK twice before lending money to anyone.

Today is Innocents' Day. Irony of ironies, this day marks the Christian world's commemoration

DON'T/ A15

AYAN, HA? MAY WARNING NA KAYO!

Janjalani believed dead

FBI in Sulu to confirm cadaver's identity

By Arlyn dela Cruz
Contributor
and Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

MARINE SOLDIERS IN SULU have unearthed a decomposing body allegedly belonging to Abu Sayyaf leader Khadaffy Janjalani and military officials say only forensic tests would confirm if they are really the remains of the country's most wanted terrorist.

Sulu-based Marine Brigade Commander Brig. Gen. Juancho Sabban said last night that the forensic examination was being conducted by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation in Sulu.

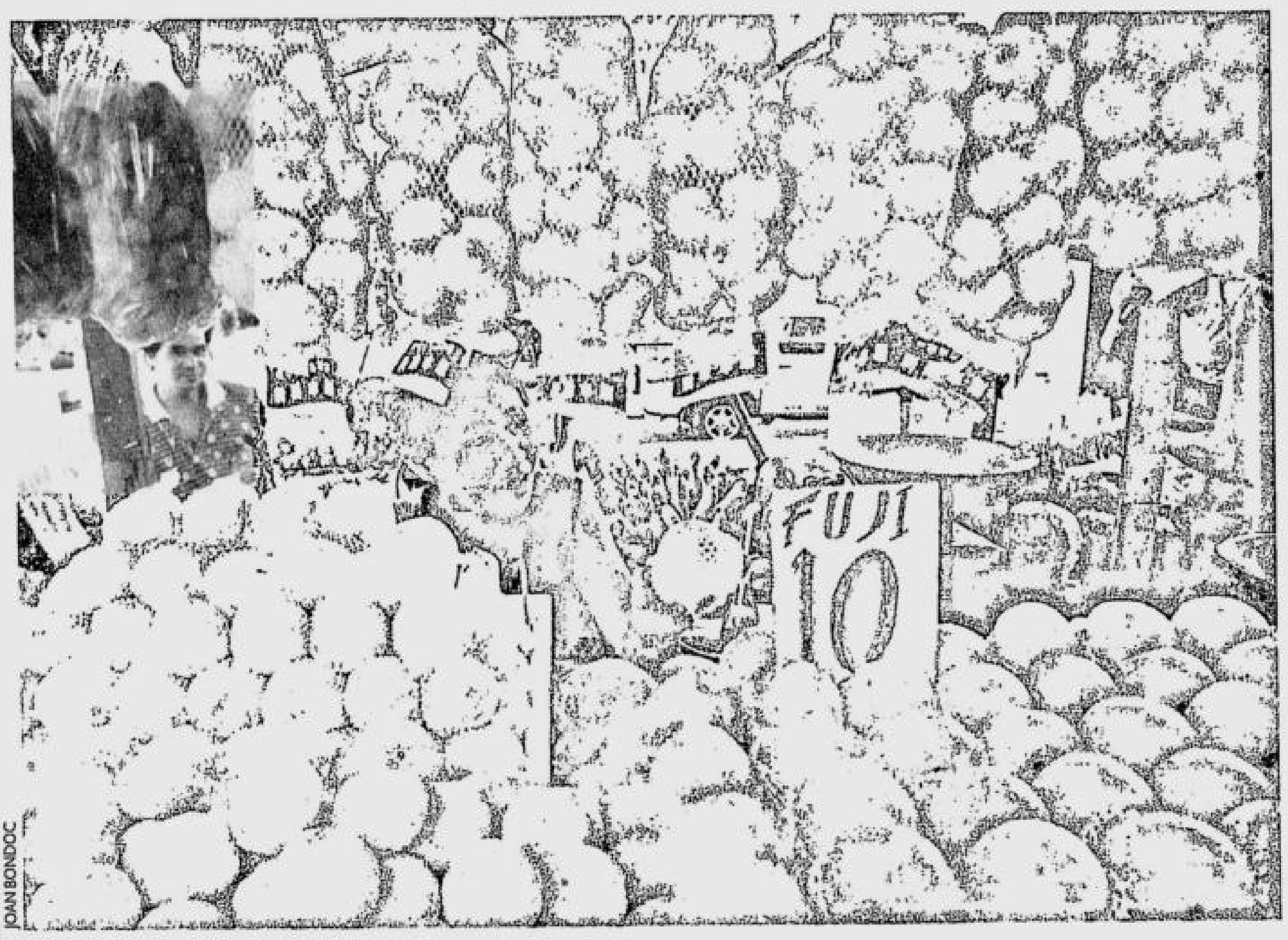
Interviewed on the phone, Sabban said the tests were being performed "*ngayong oras ng* FBI" (at this hour by the FBI).

Janjalani is one of top five Abu Sayyaf leaders for whose capture the United States government has offered a reward of $5 million (about P250 million) as part of its campaign against terror.

He has been among the targets of a US-backed manhunt and is on the US list of wanted terrorists for a series of beheadings, bombings and mass abductions.

Sabban said that "it's higher headquar-

JANJALANI/ A6



JOAN BONDOC

ROUNDING UP A NEW YEAR: Round and round go the holiday shoppers with a mind-set for better times, which means, according to the gospel of fantasy and faith, get hold of everything and anything round that can be found. Fruits happen to be most accessible, and more or less affordable, not to mention healthy. They ostensibly bring endless luck for the new year.

Singapore police alert RP on stolen aviation fuel

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THE SINGAPORE POLICE HAVE ALERTed their counterparts in the Philippines about the disappearance of six pails of jet fuel weighing about 100 kilograms from an oil storage facility in the city-state, which they said could be used as a component for explosives, an alert bulletin obtained by the INQUIRER said.

The bulletin came as Metro Manila police were recently placed on full alert in the run-up to the sixth anniversary of the Rizal Day bombings.

The bombings on Dec. 30, 2000 in Metro Manila killed at least 22 people and injured more than 100 others. It was the work of the Jemaah Islamiyah, a terrorist group with ties to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida.

Jemaah Islamiyah has been blamed for bombings across Southeast Asia, including the deadly 2002 Bali attacks.

SINGAPORE/ A6

Palace: From 'Hello Garci' to 'Vote Garci'

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

FROM "HELLO GARCI" TO "VOTE FOR Garci."

Malacañang is keen on supporting former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano should he run for congressman in Bukidnon in May 2007.

Garcillano is planning to run in the first district of Bukidnon, which is currently occupied by administration Rep. Nereus Acosta, who is on his third and last term.

Acosta's mother is reportedly seeking the same post.

"If he is not disqualified, why not?" replied Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita when asked if the administration party alliance would accept Garcillano as its candidate in the coming polls.

"I'm not sure if he is with Lakas or Kampi, both of which are in the alliance. But it's not difficult to know if you are Garcillano what party you will run under," Ermita said.

Garcillano was the infamous male voice in the "Hello Garci" scandal that triggered President Macapagal-Arroyo's most serious political crisis a year and a half ago.

The woman's voice on the wiretapped telephone conversation with the election commissioner was said to be that of Ms Arroyo. She herself had said sorry for her "lapse in judgment" in talking to a Comelec commissioner during the May 2004 election.

Opposition politicians claimed that the audio, which surfaced in June 2005,

PALACE/ A6

A FISTFUL OF ANGER: Eldest daughter Charrie (left) and a relative are inconsolable. (Right) The funeral cortege goes by the Valera house in Bangued; on its door is the governor's signature poster of a man on horseback.

LEONCIO BALBIN JR./INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

Bersamin buried; gov now a suspect

By Frank Cimatu and Leoncio Balbin Jr.
Inquirer Northern Luzon
and Alcuin Papa

THE MOURNERS OF SLAIN REP. LUIS Bersamin Jr. wore white.

White heat flared when the funeral procession passed by the ancestral house of Vicente Valera, where a poster of the Abra governor on a horse was displayed at the door.

One of Bersamin's daughters shouted "*Mamamatay tao* (Killer)!" repeatedly until her relatives hushed her. The Bersamins' house is beside the Valeras' in Bangued, the capital of Abra.

The Philippine National Police now considers Valera a suspect in the killing of Bersamin and his aide. He denies that he masterminded the killing.

Valera's wife, the mayor of Bangued, who is said to be running for governor in next year's elections, had been expected to face Bersamin.

The lawmaker's body, placed in a black and gold coffin, was laid to rest at the family mausoleum in Bangued.

At past noon, Bersamin was given state honors.

Present during the burial were Representatives Eric Singson and Salacnib Baterina of Ilocos Sur and Solomon Chungalao of Ifugao.

"Abra, wake up. You know the face of *agum* (greed) and *apal* (envy)," said Court of Appeals Associate Justice Lucas Bersamin as he called on the people of Abra to join hands and stop the killings and political tyranny in the province.

Justice Bersamin's call was met with applause from about 6,000 people who attended the lawmaker's necrological services and burial.

The crowd turnout was huge despite the pervading atmosphere of fear and tension in this capital town following the murder of Bersamin on Dec. 16 when the congressman and his security aide, SPO1 Adelfo Ortega,

BERSAMIN/ A6

Quakes slow down Asia Internet service

TELECOMMUNICATIONS around Asia were severely disrupted on Wednesday after earthquakes off Taiwan damaged undersea cables, slowing Internet services, hindering financial transactions, and triggering a tsunami scare in the Philippines that sent thousands fleeing from their coastal homes. (*See related story on Page A19*).

International telephone traffic was restricted from some countries and Internet access slowed to a crawl.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. said its Internet service was intermittent and international phone calls had been disrupted, but domestic calls and its mobile phone service were working normally.

A tsunami alert raised by Japan's Meteorological Agency shattered many nerves in the Philippines.

In the coastal town of Pasacao (pop.: 36,000) in Camarines Sur, a call from London triggered the tsunami scare that forced thousands of residents to flee to high ground on Tuesday night.

Senior Insp. Virgilio Olalia, acting town police chief, said police were surprised by the sudden

QUAKES SLOW/ A8

People believe angels are real, survey shows

WASHINGTON—A BLUEBIRD IN the garden, a spirit in a house, a kind man on the side of the road. Americans are big believers in angels, although not necessarily the ones with halos and wings.

An overwhelming majority, almost regardless of backgrounds and religious convictions, think angels are real, according to an AP-AOL News poll exploring attitudes about Santa Claus, angels and more.

Belief in angels, however people define them, is highest—almost universal—among white evangelical Christians, 97 percent of whom trust in their existence, the poll indicates. But even among people with no religious affiliation, well more than half said angels are for real.

Among the findings about angels and Santa:

- Protestants, women, Southerners, Midwesterners and Republicans were the most likely to believe in angels, although strong majorities in other groups also

PEOPLE BELIEVE/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2006

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

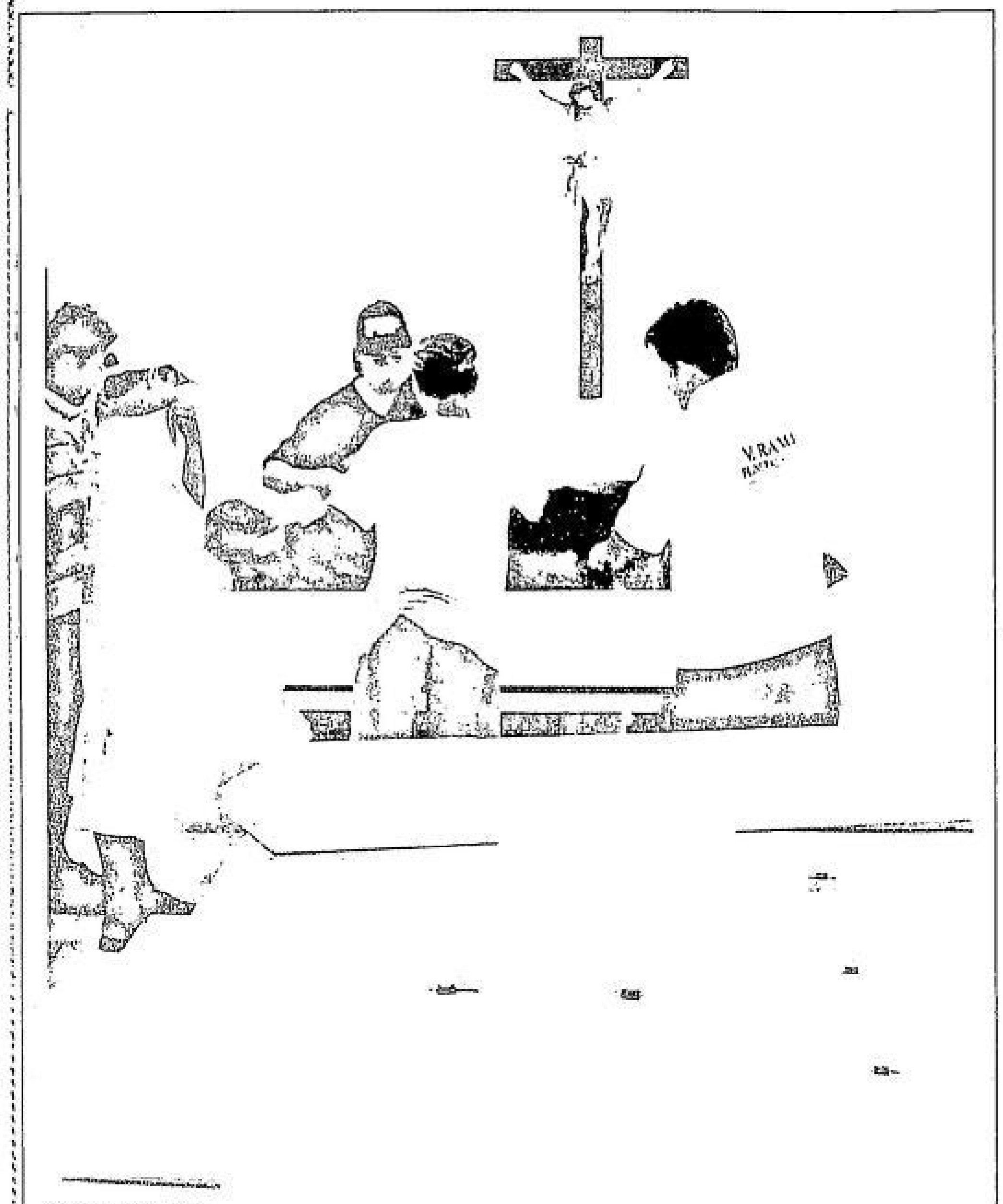
Text us your feedback: inquirer news name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon and Visayas will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers, while Mindanao will have cloudy skies with rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming widespread rains over the Bicol Region and the Eastern sections of Visayas and Mindanao. The rest of the country will be cloudy with rainshowers.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/12/27/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Rains



GRIM TASK

As relatives watch, mortuary workers and a police officer place the charred remains of a fire victim in a coffin two days after a Christmas Day fire gutted a department store in Ormoc City. The fire, blamed on fireworks that accidentally ignited, killed at least 24 people. *(See story on Page A13)* AP

PLDT deal will stand up to scrutiny—PCGG

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE PLANNED SALE OF THE GOVERNMENT STAKE in the country's largest telecommunications firm will stand up to scrutiny because of the rigorous scrutiny it was subjected to, according to a commissioner of the Presidential Commission on Good Government.

PCGG commissioner Ricardo M. Abcede also welcomed moves by lawmakers to probe the P25.2-billion deal to sell the sequestered shares in the Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. (PTIC)—which has a small stake in the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.(PLDT)—to the foreign majority owners of PLDT.

"They should have evidence to show. [The shares] were bid out transparently," he said.

Abcede stressed that the government would receive significantly more from the deal than had been expected.

He said an interagency technical group working under the finance department fully expected the 111,415 PTIC shares—which are equivalent to a 6.3-percent stake in PLDT—to be sold at a 15-percent discount.

Floor price

"We would have only received P22.5 billion," the floor price set by the interagency privatization group, said Abcede.

The sale is expected to be finalized in January, with a tripartite deed of sale between the PCGG, the finance department and the buyers—the Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd. of the Indonesian-based Salim family, represented locally by PLDT chair Manuel Pangilinan.

Camarines Norte Rep. Arnulfo Fuentebella last week criticized the deal, accusing "certain parties" of manipulating the process to favor First Pacific, the majority owners of PLDT, and its Japanese partner, NTT Do CoMo.

The PCGG has said that under the rules, First Pacific holds the so-called "right of first refusal" on the shares, which means it can win control of the contested stock simply by matching the bid of any prospective buyer.

In this case, First Pacific matched the highest bid of P25.2-billion made by the Singapore-based Parallax Capital Management, a firm that has been reported to have links to the Salim family, although this could not be independently verified.

'Milestone'

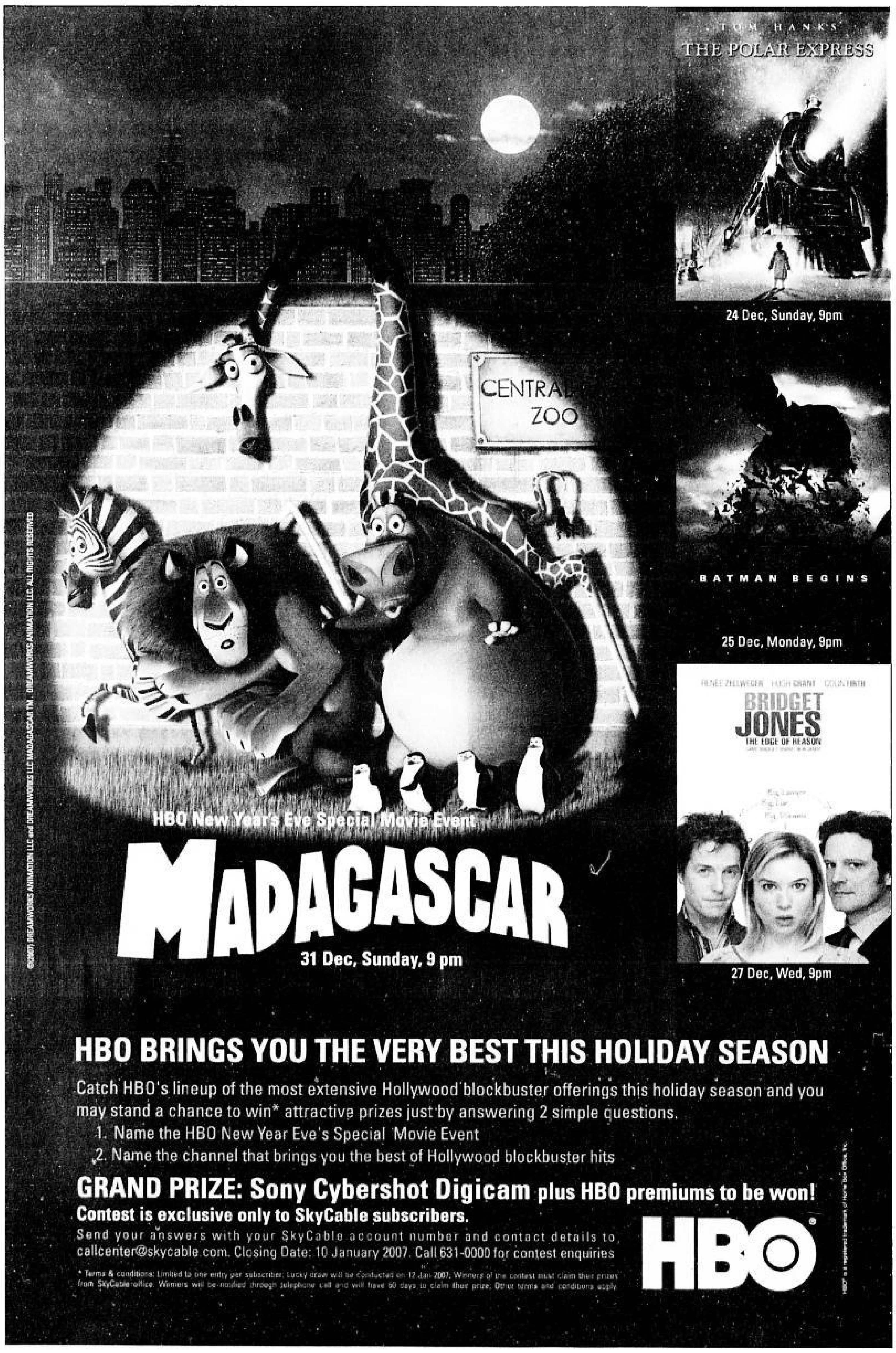
Abcede said the deal represented a milestone for the government since it will be the single largest sale from locally recovered assets by the PCGG since its creation in the aftermath of the 1986 Edsa People Power Revolution as the agency tasked to recover the ill-gotten assets of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

The PCGG sequestered the PTIC shares that were registered under the name of Prime Holdings Inc., an alleged dummy firm of Marcos. The Supreme Court and the Sandiganbayan have since ruled that the shares were indeed ill-gotten and awarded ownership to the government.

Abcede expressed confidence that the sale of the PTIC shares to First Pacific will not be derailed by the adverse publicity it is generating.

"We need the income from this because, ultimately, it is the poor citizens of this country who will benefit," he said.

The law mandates that proceeds from recovered Marcos assets go straight to fund the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.



HBO BRINGS YOU THE VERY BEST THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Catch HBO's lineup of the most extensive Hollywood blockbuster offerings this holiday season and you may stand a chance to win* attractive prizes just by answering 2 simple questions.

1. Name the HBO New Year Eve's Special Movie Event
2. Name the channel that brings you the best of Hollywood blockbuster hits

GRAND PRIZE: Sony Cybershot Digicam plus HBO premiums to be won!

Contest is exclusive only to SkyCable subscribers.

Send your answers with your SkyCable account number and contact details to callcenter@skycable.com. Closing Date: 10 January 2007. Call 631-0000 for contest enquiries

* Terms & conditions: Limited to one entry per subscriber; Lucky draw will be conducted on 12 Jan 2007; Winners of the contest must claim their prizes from SkyCable office. Winners will be notified through telephone call and will have 60 days to claim their prize; Other terms and conditions apply

PCGG target for 2007: Sell big-ticket items

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE AGENCY TASKED WITH recovering the ill-gotten wealth of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, his family and associates has set an ambitious target for itself in 2007, including the sale of a large tract of prime property in the Ortigas business district.

In an interview, Presidential Commission on Good Government commissioner Ricardo M. Abcede said his office will push for the sale of the so-called "Payanig sa Pasig" property which contains the popular Metrowalk commercial center along Meralco Avenue.

"I'm prioritizing the big ticket items we have," he said.

The Payanig sa Pasig property covers a total of 18.5 hectares and could fetch anywhere from P15 billion to P18 billion, according to an independent assessor commissioned by the PCGG, Abcede said.

Pending its actual sale, however, the PCGG is trying to renegotiate the lease contract of several business establishments on the property to bring rental rates in line with market prices, according to Abcede.

"From only P6 million a year [in rental income], we want to increase this by two or three times," he said, adding that two contracts to this effect have already been signed with lessees.

Baguio assets

The PCGG is also trying to sell the four-hectare Mountain View resort in Tagaytay City, and several vacation houses in Baguio City, all recovered or voluntarily surrendered assets by Marcos cronies in the wake of the 1986 Edsa People Power Revolution.

Abcede said the PCGG also recently reached agreement on the sequestered Baseco (the Bataan Shipyard and Engineering Co.) property in Mariveles, Bataan, mainly through a compromise deal with the Bataan provincial government to which the firm owes some P140 million in unpaid taxes.

"This case has been ongoing for 13 years. But it only took us three months to fix it after we talked to the parties involved," Abcede said.

ABCEDE

He said the resolution of the Baseco case would boost the economy of Bataan, as it would provide jobs in the shipbuilding industry.

Baseco, formerly the National Shipyard and Steel Corp., was acquired in 1973 by Alfredo Romualdez, a brother of Imelda Marcos, the widow of the dictator.

Failed mandate

The PCGG sequestered Baseco after the 1986 People Power Revolution on suspicion that it was part of the Marcos ill-gotten wealth, and acquired using Romualdez as a dummy.

The Baseco properties were auctioned off in 1988 after the Romualdez group failed to pay real property taxes.

Despite criticism that the agency has failed in its mandate, Abcede said the PCGG has recorded its best performance to date under the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"Close to 70 percent of all the funds we've remitted to the Treasury have happened under this administration," he said, pointing to the sale of the sequestered stake in the Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. and the recovery of $600 million worth of Marcos Swiss deposits.

Abcede said PCGG is still working on at least 520 cases involving sequestered assets of the Marcos family and their associates.

Time to quit, Mike D told

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

DEFENSOR

PRESIDENTIAL CHIEF OF STAFF Michael Defensor should resign soon to jumpstart his senatorial campaign.

This was the friendly advice of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita who, along with his Lakas colleagues in the Cabinet, have locked horns with Defensor on the issue of Charter change. Ermita and the Lakas bloc in the Cabinet are all out for Charter change while Defensor believes it is not yet the proper time.

"Right now, the only one I know who has made a decision to run for the Senate is Secretary Mike Defensor. It follows he has to submit his resignation in due time for him to be able to prepare for his election and for the President to choose a replacement," said Ermita in a briefing. He also cited Secretary Roberto Pagdanganan who was reported to be planning to reclaim his old seat as Bulacan governor.

Ermita said he talked to Defensor a few days ago and gave him advice. "I told him 'It's your decision if you think you should stay on your job first as chief of staff and move around the country. That is good for your candidacy. You can also resign now and go around without too much problem.'"

"I don't have to coach him, he's a better politician than I am," Ermita said.

Ermita stressed that he was not planning to run in the elections despite repeated pronouncements by Defensor that the former Batangas congressman was among the Cabinet members eyeing the Senate. Ermita had even asked Defensor to stop making this announcement twice in the past.

Ermita said Presidential Adviser on Political Affairs Gabriel Claudio already has a shortlist of possible members of the administration slate but he refused to say who they were.

Go out and register, new voters urged

WITH ONLY FOUR REGISTRATION days to go, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) yesterday appealed to new voters to take advantage of the holidays and register.

"They should not let this opportunity slip; registering is something that a responsible citizen should find worth doing," said Comelec education and information department chief James Arthur Jimenez.

Jimenez said local election offices which are found in each of the country's congressional districts, would be open office hours on Dec. 30 and 31, both declared holidays.

The registrant is only required to bring an identification card or documents. Any of the following will do: current Employee's ID with signature of the employer, student's ID or library card; postal ID, driver's license, NBI or PNP clearance, passport, SSS or GSIS ID, Integrated Bar of the Philippines ID, or any license issued by the Professional Regulation Commission.

Jimenez added that Comelec was unlikely to extend the deadline for registration because doing so would upset the timetable of preparations for the May 2007 election.

The election period starts Jan. 15, 2007.

Comelec projects the total number of voters at more than 49 million, and the number of precincts at 310,000.

Jerome Aning

"WE DARE YOU TO COMPARE US WITH OTHERS"
DRAGON FIREWORKS
• BIG PRICE OFF •
Now Accepting Dealers
FREE DELIVERY
Tel Nos.: 421-6135 / 911-2981 • Telefax: 421-7584 • Mobile No.: 0917-8881881
Website: www.dragonfireworks.com • E-mail: dragonfireworks_888@yahoo.com

The PSBank Home Loan
Lower. Longer. Faster. Fixed.

With rates even lower than before, owning your home gets even easier, through the PSBank Home Loan. Fixed for up to 25 years, longer than most other banks offer. Faster too. In fact, apply now, and if you don't get a response within 5 days, we'll give you 1% off your first year's interest.

Fixing Period	Interest Rate
1 - year	9.00%
2 - year	9.25%
3 - year	9.50%
5 - year	9.75%
10 - year	11.00%
25 - year	11.50%

Rates apply for new term loan releases and purpose is acquisition or construction. Refinancing available with term and fixing period up to 15 years only. Rates subject to change without prior notice.

Also available in 15 and 20-year fixing periods.

Text us: PSBANK HOME RATE <your name> <your landline nos.> <your email address> then send to 391-772 for Smart or 0917-890-2327 for Globe and other networks • Visit us: www.psbank.com.ph • Email us: info@psbank.com.ph • Call us: 845-8772

T.G.I.F.
Thank Goodness It's Five days.

Apply now at any PSBank branch nationwide.

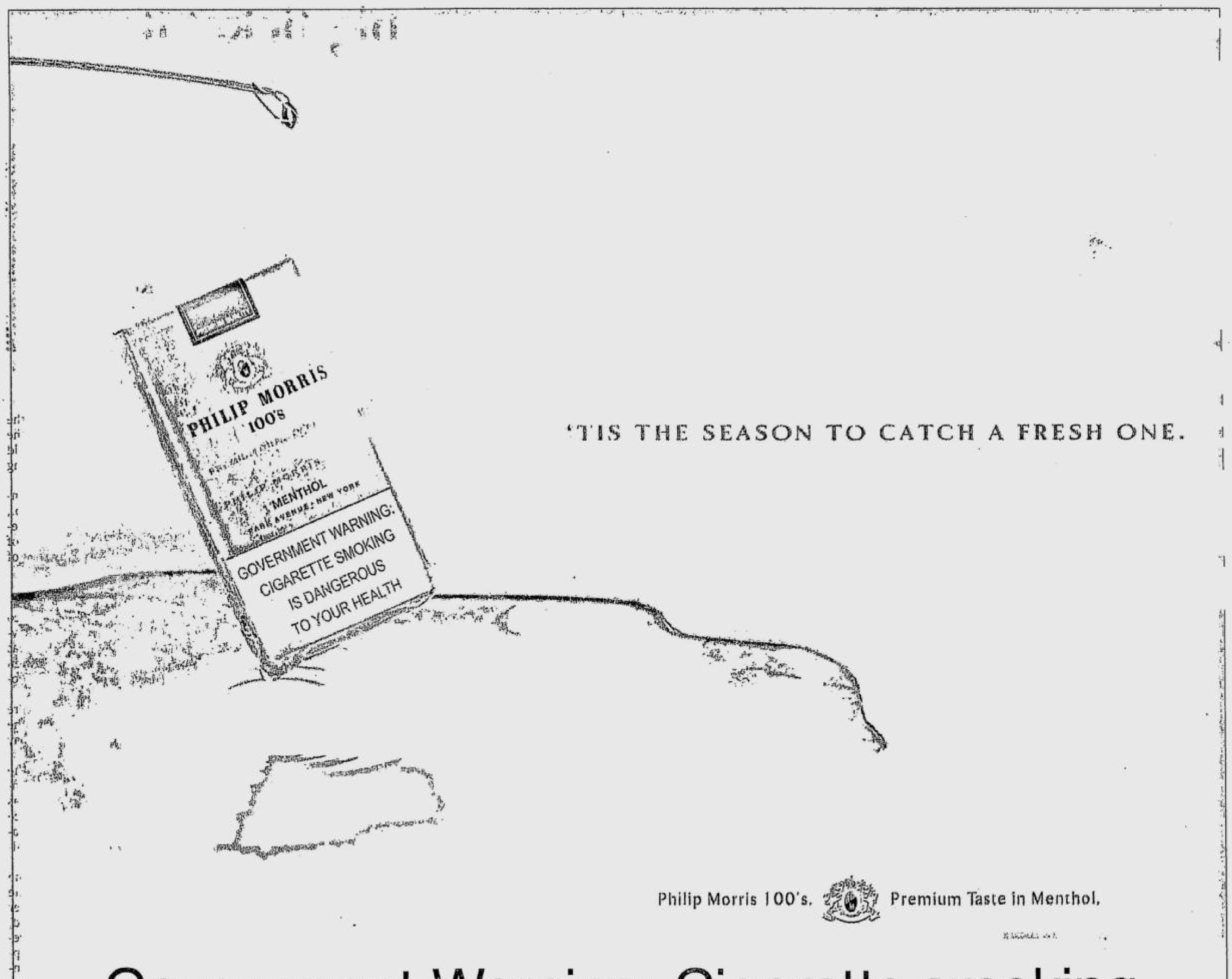
PSBank Home LOAN

HAVING INSURANCE THESE DAYS REALLY PAYS. LITERALLY.

Get the most out of your investment with Income Earner. It's the life insurance plan that provides you with guaranteed cash returns regularly. So you don't have to worry about unexpected expenses in the future. For details, call our Customer Care Department at 771-1818 or visit www.insularlife.com.ph.

THE INSULAR LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY, LTD.

income earner


PHILIP MORRIS
100's
MENTHOL
PARK AVENUE • NEW YORK
GOVERNMENT WARNING: CIGARETTE SMOKING IS DANGEROUS TO YOUR HEALTH

'TIS THE SEASON TO CATCH A FRESH ONE.

Philip Morris 100's. Premium Taste in Menthol.

Government Warning: Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health

CEBU WEDDING
President Macapagal-Arroyo stands as principal sponsor opposite tycoon Lucio Tan in the wedding of Erwyn Ong and Maribel Ang. Yesterday's celebrated wedding was held at the Sacred Heart Parish church. CDN PHOTO/TONEE DESPOJO

Customs chief plans revamp

Revision of revenue targets for 2007 sought

By Leila B. Salaverria

CUSTOMS COMMISSIONER Napoleon Morales plans to undertake a revamp at the Bureau of Customs in the new year even if the agency meets its P196 billion target for 2006.

Morales said the revamp would be based on the performance of its 15 district collectors this year, noting that some district collectors did not meet their monthly goals.

"We have to remove our non-performing assets. We have to replace them and give others a chance to serve," he said in a recent interview.

According to Morales, the bureau only managed to meet its overall target and post a surplus collection because of the excess revenues of other ports.

He said he had set the revamp for 2007 in deference to the Christmas season even if some ports missed their targets several times.

The revamp of the district collectors would take place before the May 2007 elections, Morales said.

Morales said district collectors would be required to submit their yearend reports, which would be the basis for the assessment and evaluation of their performances in preparation for reassigning some of them to new posts.

"My assessment of their performance would not be based only on their December collection, but on their performance this whole year. We gave them the chance to prove themselves, and we will see how they did," Morales said.

The reassignment of district collectors has not always been hassle-free for the customs bureau.

In March this year, two revamps at the BOC were held in abeyance and reevaluated.

One of the affected officials in the reshuffle was Port of Cebu collector Lourdes Mangaoang, who contested her new assignment, saying it was not approved by Finance Secretary Margarito Teves.

The March reshuffle also affected then Manila International Container Port collector Carlos So, who was supposed to be transferred to the Office of the Commissioner, which is akin to being placed on floating status.

As this developed, Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile yesterday proposed a review of the budget and revenue goals of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the BOC to be used as the basis for the enforcement of the Lateral Attrition Law.

Under the Attrition Law (Republic Act 9335), officials of the BIR and Customs would be subject to dismissal or separation from the service if their revenue collections fell at least 7.4 percent below the collection target.

Enrile said the application of the law based on unrealistic and questionable revenue targets would be unfair to the revenue officials because their failure to meet the said targets could be due to circumstances beyond their control, such as an inadequate budget, lack of personnel and unfavorable economic conditions.

"The targets could be set too high in order to set the stage for the mass dismissal of BIR and customs personnel, to be filled by others. This would wreak havoc on the two revenue-collecting agencies as they would be rid of experienced revenue workers. This was not the intention of the Lateral Attrition Law."

The BIR is tasked to collect this year P675 billion.

Enrile said the targets must be realistically attainable "to be just and fair to the people concerned."

Sino fishermen to face charges; fishes to be freed

By Norman Bordadora and Volt Contreras

THIRTY CHINESE FISHERMEN caught last week crossing the Tubbataha Reef Marine Park off Palawan with a load of 1,200 endangered fishes and poaching gear will be charged for violations of the Philippine Fishery code, environment activist Lorenzo Tan reported yesterday.

Before they are brought to Puerto Princesa for the filing of charges, their endangered cargo will be freed back into the reef, added Tan, president of the World Wide Fund for Nature in the Philippines.

Tubbataha, which hosts among the most diverse marine life in the world, has been declared a Unesco World Heritage Site.

Marine park rangers intercepted the Chinese vessel Hoi Wan on Dec. 21. Their cargo yielded live Napoleon wrasse fishes (locally known as "Mameng"), which are protected species.

The Chinese crew denied they were poachers.. They said they were merely passing through the park and the fish were bought from the locals.

Tan, however, raised an alarm last week over reports that the Department of Foreign Affairs was interceding for the release of the Chinese fishermen—a charge the DFA has denied.

There is actually no law declaring the Tubbataha park a national protected area. A bill to this effect is still pending in the Senate.

But Tan told the INQUIRER that the Chinese will be charged with for violation of the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998, which includes sanctions against illegal poaching. If found guilty, the fishermen aboard the Chinese vessel Hoi Wan will have to pay a penalty of P120,000 each or P3.5 million in fines.

Tan also said WWF was disappointed with the Philippine Navy's inaction in providing a vessel for the transfer of the Chinese from Tubbataha to Puerto Princesa.

"How can they say there is no available vessel when there are many Navy vessels based in Palawan?" Tan said.

The vessel that will take the suspects from Tubbataha to Puerto Princesa was provided by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

Meanwhile, Senator Jamby Madrigal, a member of the Senate environment committee, joined Tan in accusing the DFA of "sacrificing the rule of law for diplomacy." Madrigal pointed out that the entry of commercial vessels into the Tubbataha reef is banned by a provincial ordinance, while possession of "Mameng" is prohibited under the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES).

DFA spokesperson Ed Malaya responded that an official from the department had merely asked for a report on the incident, which is to be tackled today by the National Committee on Illegal Entrants, an inter-agency body headed by the DFA.

Malaya described as "not accurate" statements made by Tan that DFA interceded for the release of the Chinese crewmen and their vessel.

Tubbataha consists of two atolls covering roughly 10,000 hectares of corals. The reef is home to more than 1,000 species, many of which are endangered such as manta rays, lionfish, *pawikan* or tortoise, clownfish, and sharks. *With reports from TJ Burgonio*

MBC MANILA BROADCASTING COMPANY
MMDA
NCAP
TANDUAY
TUSERAN FORTE
MULTIVITAMINS ENERVON
PLDT Budget CARD
MAGSAYA! MANOOD! MAGKAPERA! sa
The 32nd Metro Manila Film Festival 2006
CASH sa PELIKULA
OVER P1M to be given away!
PANOORIN NATING LAHAT!

You can also win "All-year-round" Cinema Cards from Robinson's Movieworld or get a chance to double your cash prize courtesy of SM Cinemas! Check-out theater lobby posters for details!

Mechanics:

1. Prizes: Grand Prize : One (1) winner of P100,000 Consolation Prize : Ninety nine (99) winners of P5,000 each.
2. Promo is open to all patrons (paying customers) of the featured films of the MMFF. Promo period is from December 25, 2006 to January 5, 2007.
3. On the first time a participant purchases one (1) ticket at any participating theater showing any of the featured films he/she receives an Official Cash sa Pelikula Promo Card.
4. Participant must enter all required particulars on to the card and affix signature.
5. On each card are spaces for the featured films. Each time a participant watches any of the featured films at any participating theater, assigned theater personnel will stamp with official promo markings the spaces/logos corresponding to the film.
6. Participant must have at least 5 marks (or must watch at least 5 movies and have his/her card marked each time) on the card to form a valid entry.
7. All forms of free passes (MTRCB Pass, Makati Senior Citizens, etc.) will not be qualified to avail of the promo card or any promo marking
8. Valid entries may be dropped at drop boxes located at the participating theaters. Deadline of submission of entries is on January 5, 2007 at 11pm.
9. If a name is drawn more than once in the Grand draw, he/she gets the bigger prize.
10. Grand Draw will be on January 13, 2007 at the Star City Activity Center
11. Only Official Representatives of MBC, NCAP, MMFF Executive Committee and DTI will validate all winning raffle entries during draws.
12. All entries shall be gathered at a designated area at SM Mall of Asia, Pasay City. After which, all entries shall be picked up by MBC representatives and transported to th Grand Draw site.
13. Winners will be notified through registered mail and announced on-air thru respective MBC radio stations
14. Grand Prize Winner may claim his/her prize at MBC Head Office. Provincial winners can claim their prizes at the nearest MBC Station specified in the registered mail.
15. Winners are required to present a valid ID and the registered notice when claiming prizes.
16. All raffle prizes should be claimed within sixty (60) days from receipt of notification otherwise will be forfeited in favor of MBC upon approval of DTI.
17. Prizes exceeding P10,000 is subject to 20% tax and will be charged to the winner and prizes are non-transferable.
18. All employees of MBC and its affiliates, participating sponsors, their advertising agencies and their spouses and relatives up to 2nd degree of consanguinity or affinity including relatives by legal adoption are excluded from joining the promo.

Also brought to you by:

Per DTI-NCR Permit #5517, Series of 2006.

Gordon told: Don't press GMA on poll automation

By Jerome Aning

PRESIDENT ARROYO'S ELECTION lawyer, Romulo Macalintal, reacted sharply yesterday to Sen. Richard Gordon's insistence that President Arroyo immediately sign the partial election automation law.

Signing the bill at this late date would "only cause further confusion on an already confused electorate," Macalintal told reporters yesterday.

Macalintal said Sen. Gordon, chair of the committee on constitutional amendments, was being "unfair" when he said that the President's failure to sign the bill "would fuel suspicions that the administration is planning to cheat in next year's elections."

Great service

"On the contrary, the President would do a great service to the nation and to our political system if she does not sign the proposed legislation" since it is too late and impractical to implement the scheme, he said.

"For if she signs it, and later on Comelec can't implement it, then it would not only be a great embarrassment for her but it could also really fuel suspicions of attempts to cheat in the elections , Macalintal added.

He urged Gordon and legislators to recall the bill and review its provisions.

Earlier deadline

Macalintal explained that even if Ms Arroyo signs the proposed legislation, for example, on Jan. 1, 2007, it could only be effective 15 days after its publication, as required by law. The Commission on Elections then has to come out with implementing rules and regulations that would be effective seven days after publication in two newspapers of general circulation.

The implementation of the partial automation would also entail an earlier deadline for the filing of candidacy in order to prepare a special ballot which would list positions, full names and nicknames of all candidates.

No longer possible

The present schedule for the filing of certificates of candidacy for senators is on Feb. 12 and for local officials, March 29. Present manual ballots need only list the positions up for election; the voter fills up the blanks with the names of his or her candidates of choice.

Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos Sr., has said that given the short time available, it was no longer possible to automate the voting and counting of midyear polls.

Insincere

The House and the Senate ratified the election bill last Dec. 7, authorizing the partial automation of elections in six provinces and six highly urbanized cities in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao in 2007, and full automation in 2010.

"She has to sign it. She will be seen as insincere [if she doesn't]," chided Sen. Gordon on Tuesday, noting that President Arroyo had certified the election reform bill as part of her government's agenda.

"I'm puzzled why she has not acted on the measure," Gordon added.

FIRECRACKER MAKER Juanito Edora works on dried gunpowder with his bare hands. AFP

Explosive fun is big, hazardous business

BOCAUE, BULACAN—JUANITO Edora carefully fills paper tubes with gunpowder and other chemicals at a backyard fireworks factory here as he tries to keep up with demand ahead of the New Year.

Sales have been high in the run-up to New Year's Eve, when millions of Filipinos will risk their limbs exploding fireworks to greet the coming year in a tradition that maims many and in some cases kills.

Edora, a 28-year-old father of three, has been working nonstop for several hours, scooping up the chemicals with his bare hands.

He fills the tubes, which are then attached to bamboo sticks with a timing device, transforming them into "baby rockets" that explode in the air.

The gunpowder is also made into firecrackers in various shapes and colors that are powerful enough to tear apart tin cans and blow off fingers and hands.

The health department has banned some of the more powerful firecrackers after fatalities and hundreds of injuries last year. But it still has not stopped people risking injury making them.

Making firecrackers is hard and dangerous labor and there is no insurance. But the seasonal job lures thousands of mostly young men and boys to the town of Bocaue, because the fixed daily wage of P150 pesos is more than they would earn elsewhere.

There are no exact statistics, but firecracker-making is a thriving industry that has for years augmented the local economy here, which relies mainly on farming for the rest of the year.

"I earn more doing this than driving a bus," Edora tells AFP, while taking a break, his body covered in a gray powder. "I have been doing this for four years. It is dangerous, but it's an honest living."

George Calimlim, 40, who runs a firecracker store that employs several workers, says a local cooperative lends money at the start of November to fund their operations.

They have to pay back the loan before New Year but he says sales are always guaranteed.

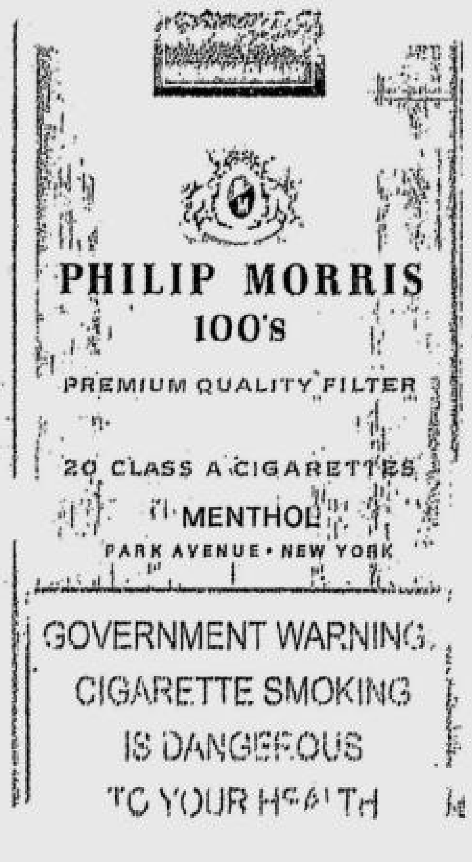
"This puts food on our table, and helps send my 10 children to school," Calimlim says, adding that he takes extreme caution to prevent accidents.

Hundreds are maimed and several are killed in annual New Year's Eve revelry in the Philippines.

The health department has placed some 72 hospitals in Metro Manila on alert to treat firecracker injuries, with appeals to the public apparently falling on deaf ears.

Already, records at the health department show that from Dec. 20-25 alone there were 124 cases of firecracker injuries—almost double the 2005 figure of 63 for the same period.

On Christmas Day, 25 people were killed when a store illegally selling firecrackers was razed to the ground by a fire in the central city of Ormoc. *AFP*



TIS THE SEASON TO HAVE A BALL

Philip Morris 100's. Premium Taste in Menthol.

Government Warning: Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health

Janjalani believed dead; FBI team in Sulu

From page A1

ters" who would give the confirmation on whose body it was that the Marines had dug up.

"We will let the forensic test speak for itself," he said.

Sabban claimed he had reasons to believe the information that led the Marines to the site of the remains was "A-1", or credible.

He refused to identify his informants except to say that they were "four Abu Sayyaf members."

He said his informants told him that "*sila mismo ang naglibing at nagbuhat kay Janjalani* (They were the ones who actually carried Janjalani and buried him)."

Sabban said the body was exhumed in Patikul.

According to Sabban, his informants told him that Janjalani was among those killed during an encounter with a Marine reconnaissance company in Indanan, Sulu, on Sept. 4.

That company was led by 1st Lt. Romulo Dimayuga, who lost six men in that clash.

More cautious

Philippine Marine Corps Commandant Maj. Gen. Nelson Allaga, in a separate phone interview earlier yesterday, sounded more cautious on the identity of the exhumed body, saying he was still "not sure if the body belongs to Janjalani."

"It is still not conclusive as far as we are concerned," Allaga said.

"*Baka makuryente kami* (We might get a bum steer) and our image will suffer later if the report is not true," he added.

Conflicting stories

Allaga said a civilian informant claimed "he was the one who buried Janjalani" after a military operation in Sulu.

But there appeared to be some conflict in the versions given by Allaga and Sabban.

While Sabban said his informants claimed Janjalani was killed on Sept. 4 in Indanan, the informant cited by Allaga said Janjalani was killed on Sept. 24 in the hinterlands of Patikul.

"He also guided and showed the troops where Janjalani was supposedly buried," Allaga said.

Huge reward

Allaga also said: "We are not sure of this informant. He may be doing this because of the huge amount of reward or maybe some groups or quarters would like to make it appear that Janjalani is dead."

He has been variously reported to have been killed in military operations only for the reports to be denied by the Abu Sayyaf later.

Jemaah Islamiyah

Janjalani was last reported to be with the group of Indonesian Jemaah Islamiyah militants Omar Patek and Dulmatin in Sulu last September.

Since then, Patek and Dulmatin were reported to have moved to Central Mindanao.

In 2004, Janjalani was also reported to have been killed in a Philippine Air Force raid on an Abu Sayyaf hideout in Central Mindanao but doubts persisted that he was really dead.

It was later confirmed that Janjalani was indeed in that group of Abu Sayyaf hit by the Air Force, but reports later said he survived although wounded.

Sabban was the lead officer responsible for the death of another top Abu Sayyaf commander, Aldam Tilao, popularly known as Abu Sabaya, who was killed in an encounter in Zamboanga del Norte in 2002.

Lacson slams Gonzalez advice to seek redress from NPA

By TJ Burgonio

OPPOSITION SEN. PANFILO Lacson yesterday scoffed at Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez's advice to the lawmakers who lost the perjury case against Virgilio Garcillano to seek redress from the communist rebels if they didn't trust the Department of Justice.

Lacson, who filed the charges with some congressmen against the former election commissioner that were eventually dismissed by the DOJ, called Gonzalez's advice "out of line" and an indication of his "utter disrespect for the rule of law."

"Is he saying vigilantism or a kangaroo court would be better forums for seeking justice than our justice system and the courts? Considering his closeness to Malacañang, it is quite dismaying for a justice secretary to advocate so-called extrajudicial solutions," he said.

The senator said he was tempted to take up the justice secretary's challenge "considering how he has mishandled the case," but said that he still had the "soundness of mind to adhere to the rule of law."

Gonzalez was quoted Wednesday morning as saying on radio that the case did not reach his level and that if the losing complainants did not trust the department, they might as well run to the communist New People's Army and its kangaroo courts for redress.

Cleared of perjury, etc

In a Nov. 14 resolution, the DOJ cleared Garcillano of 21 counts of perjury and falsification of passport charges filed by Lacson and 19 congressmen in March and April 2006.

The charges stemmed from the alleged false statements he made at a House inquiry into a wiretapping scandal in mid-2005.

In junking the case, it discredited a note verbale from Singapore and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas report confirming his travel abroad, and pointed to the failure of the lawmakers to prove that Garcillano's statements before a House investigating committee were made under oath.

Garcillano had voiced hopes that the dismissal would put a closure to the wiretapping scandal that suggested that he and President Macapagal-Arroyo had conspired to rig the results of the 2004 presidential vote in her favor.

But lawmakers believed otherwise, arguing that the dismissed cases were separate from the allegations of electoral fraud that had yet to be fully addressed by the Arroyo administration.

Lacson, who had tangled with Gonzalez in the media on a number of issues, said it was high time for the justice secretary to start showing restraint in his statements because of his health problems.

'Sneaky'

Lacson earlier asked Gonzalez to stop claiming that the complainants' failure to attend the preliminary investigation led to the dismissal of the case.

He said he personally went to the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office at least twice to pursue the case, yet his office never received any more summonses after the DOJ took away the case from the Quezon City prosecutor "in a sneaky fashion."

"Further, we presented more than enough evidence to establish probable cause. If Gonzalez was looking at guilt beyond reasonable doubt, he must be told that it is the function of the court, which is what we intend to do had the DOJ filed the information," he said.

Palace: From 'Hello Garci' to 'Vote Garci'

From page A1

was evidence that Ms Arroyo cheated in last year's presidential election.

Can't find Garci

The audio showed a woman who sounded like Ms Arroyo asking a man, said to be Garcillano, to rig the 2004 election by producing a one-million margin over her nearest rival, the late actor Fernando Poe Jr.

The "Hello Garci" tapes and questions about the legitimacy of Ms Arroyo's presidency led to the resignation of a group of key Cabinet members, street protests and the filing of impeachment complaints against her.

Ms Arroyo's allies in the House of Representatives thumbed down the impeachment complaints—in 2005 and again this year.

Opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson said Malacañang could not afford to junk Garcillano.

"The truth is, they can ill afford to antagonize Garcillano lest he might tell the truth about the cheating in the May 2004 elections, which will inevitably implicate Ms Arroyo and the others who participated in prostituting the May 2004 elections," Lacson said.

Ermita was noncommittal on what kind of support the administration was planning to extend to Garcillano.

"I cannot say with confidence what kind of support we will give. As long as he is with the alliance, we will back him up at the very least with moral support," Ermita said.

Key issue

The executive secretary was not worried about the possibility of the opposition using Garcillano's candidacy to revive the "Hello Garci" scandal and make the President's legitimacy a key issue in the 2007 elections.

"The opposition had been harping at it for a long time. Just a few days ago, when the DOJ (Department of Justice) dismissed his (Garcillano) case, they were at it again. It is something that is of public knowledge that need not be kept hidden because it is being talked about publicly," said Ermita.

Even the prospect of infighting among party mates likely to be caused by Garcillano's candidacy did not faze the Palace.

"There are a lot of situations like that in the country because the majority party has many alliances. We will have to face these situations as they come. This is not the first time we are faced with the situation," said Ermita on the prospect of an Acosta-Garcillano standoff.

Bersamin buried; governor now a suspect

From page A1

were shot dead in front of the Mt. Carmel Church in New Manila, Quezon City.

"I myself vowed to keep my mouth shut but I can no longer be silent," said Justice Bersamin during the necrological services at the Abra High School.

He said he kept his cool until he heard Director Jesus Versoza, chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, say that Valera was already a suspect in the killing of Bersamin and his police bodyguard.

SABI ni PANDAY
SUMUKO KA NA LIZARDO
BISTADO
NO
CONG

MOURNERS' SENTIMENTS at Bersamin funeral scream from streamers, including that one referring to the heroic Fernando Poe Jr.-starrer "Ang Panday" and its villain named Lizardo played by Max Alvarado. TOOTS SOBERANO/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

Other evidence

Despite the hearsay testimony of former Army M/Sgt. Rufino Panday, the police have other circumstantial evidence to pin down Valera, Versoza said yesterday.

"He (Valera) is now a suspect. He has been implicated by Panday. Although it appears to be hearsay, there is a point in it since it is a sworn statement," Versoza said in a phone interview with the INQUIRER.

The PNP spokesperson, Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao, took a similar line. "Naturally, he (Valera) is one of those being looked into as having a participation in the case," Pagdilao said in a statement.

Motorcycle

Investigators managed to track down and arrest Panday after his address was found in the papers of a motorcycle used by the gunmen as an escape vehicle.

In his sworn statement, Panday said one of the suspects, former La Paz, Abra, Vice Mayor Freddie Dupo, had told him that a contract was taken out for Bersamin's life for P5 million and that Valera had ordered the killing.

Versoza said Panday's testimony would not stand in court "but we have circumstantial evidence that can support this."

"There was his [Valera's] presence in the wedding, and then he left abruptly without any apparent reason," Versoza said.

One of the suspects Dominador Barbosa served as a security aide of Valera.

Formal invitation

In a radio interview yesterday morning, Valera denied knowing Barbosa. He also explained his sudden departure from the wedding where Bersamin was shot, saying he wanted to go ahead to the reception venue.

"That is why we are inviting him so he can shed some light on these things," Versoza said.

Also yesterday, the Quezon City police served a formal invitation at Valera's residence in Xavierville Subdivision for the governor to appear before investigators. *(See box story)*

"Right now, everyone is a suspect. Instead of talking to the media, maybe he (Valera) should tell us everything he knows," Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula, Quezon City Police District chief, told the INQUIRER.

FPJ's Panday

Several people who joined the funeral procession held streamers and carried banners calling for justice and vengeance for Bersamin's death.

"No to Tyranny," "*Huwag magdeny. Bistado Ka* (Don't Deny. Your cover has been blown)," "*Aray Abra* (in reference to the province's festival, '*Arya Abra*'). *Ania ti Basol Ko* (What is my sin)?" and "*Sabi ni Panday, Sumuko ka na Lizardo* (Panday said you must surrender Lizardo)," were among the streamers carried by town officials and their supporters who are allied with the Bersamins.

The last referred to the popular movie series starring the late Fernando Poe Jr. as Panday (the blacksmith) with Lizardo (played by actor Max Alvarado) as the villain.

Panday now refers to Rufino Panday, who was arrested for his alleged involvement in the killing of Bersamin.

"We are not a violent family. We pray for the [triumph] of justice," said Eustaquio "Kit" Bersamin, the slain lawmaker's younger brother.

Scholarship fund

Kit Bersamin said the Bersamins raised P190,000 and $900 (P44,352) during the wake and would use the money for the scholarship fund in honor of the slain lawmaker.

Kit is being eyed to run for the province's lone congressional seat in the May 2007 elections.

Charrie Bersamin, the eldest daughter of the lawmaker, said she was amused to hear from Valera in a television interview that she was being offered the post of Bangued mayor in the next elections.

"No way. I declined his invitation," she said.

Justice Bersamin said the family had decided that it would only have one politician after his eldest brother, Luis, became acting Bangued mayor in 1986.

"I diverted myself to the judiciary where I became a judge. I did not regret my decision but I now regret the decision of my brother because he lies here, lifeless," he said.

Human, divine justice

He said he prayed for justice to take its course.

"I prayed for divine justice and human justice even if the latter is slow and difficult and may be hopeless that leads to despair. But I am a judge who knows human justice. I pleaded for the investigators not to take shortcuts," he said.

Justice Bersamin said "divine justice" came in the motorcycle that was left by the killers. It eventually led to Panday, who led investigators to Valera.

Senior Supt. Eugene Martin, Task Force Abra chief, said his team of about 100 members of the PNP's Special Action Force and the regional police's mobile group would stay in Abra until the tension clears.

Martin said the task force was looking for loose firearms and was updating its list of wanted persons in all towns of Abra to avert violence and crime.

Armed groups dismantled

He said the task force received "strict orders" to dismantle the private armed groups and other criminal gangs in the province.

"There will be no more permanent bodyguards for the mayors. We are only providing them on a need basis. If they are traveling, they can ask the task force for reinforcements," he said.

Cops fail to find Valera in QC home

By Alcuin Papa

POLICE TRIED BUT FAILED YESterday to serve an invitation to Abra Gov. Vicente Valera for him to appear before investigators on the murder of Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin.

Police led by the Quezon City police district chief, Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula, arrived at Valera's house at 26 Guerrero St., Xavierville 1, Barangay Loyola Heights in Quezon City at past 1 p.m. but failed to find the governor.

"It's merely an invitation letter to shed light on the revelations of (former Master Sgt. Rufino) Panday in his sworn statement," Gatdula said.

Instead, the invitation letter was given to the governor's house caretaker, identified as Fred Beboso, according to Director Jesus Versoza, Criminal Investigation and Detection Group chief.

On not finding Valera at the residence, Gatdula said "he (Valera) knows now what he has to do."

Singapore police alert RP on stolen aviation fuel

From page A1

In the alert bulletin sent to the Philippine National Police Bomb Data Center, the Singapore Criminal Investigation Department Bomb Data Center identified the stolen product as Stadis 450.

The Singapore police said Stadis 450 was in six sealed blue containers when discovered missing on Dec. 4 from Oil Tanking Singapore Limited on Seraya Avenue on Jurong Island.

Flammable liquid

The stolen product was classified as flammable liquid and hazardous material.

"Being flammable, the additive can be used as fuel oil together with an improvised explosive device for incendiary effect," the Singapore police said.

The "six pails" weighed 15.9 kilograms each and measured about 50 cm, or four feet and two inches, and 38 cm or three feet and two inches in diameter.

The Singapore police said the stolen chemical was composed of polymeric nitrogen and toluene, a high octane fuel.

Common practice

Supt. Rafael Santiago, Northern Police District Investigation and Intelligence chief, said the bulletin was a common practice among intelligence groups particularly if it concerned terrorist activities.

"The theft raises security concerns because it could be terrorist-related," Santiago said when asked why the Singapore police would alert international police units over a theft that took place in the city-state.

Singapore is known to share information about terrorist cells and their activities. In 2003, it arrested 13 members of Jemaah Islamiyah for allegedly plotting to bomb US allies in the war against terrorism.

Jet fuels are not sold openly in the market and carriers have their own suppliers, according to Santiago.

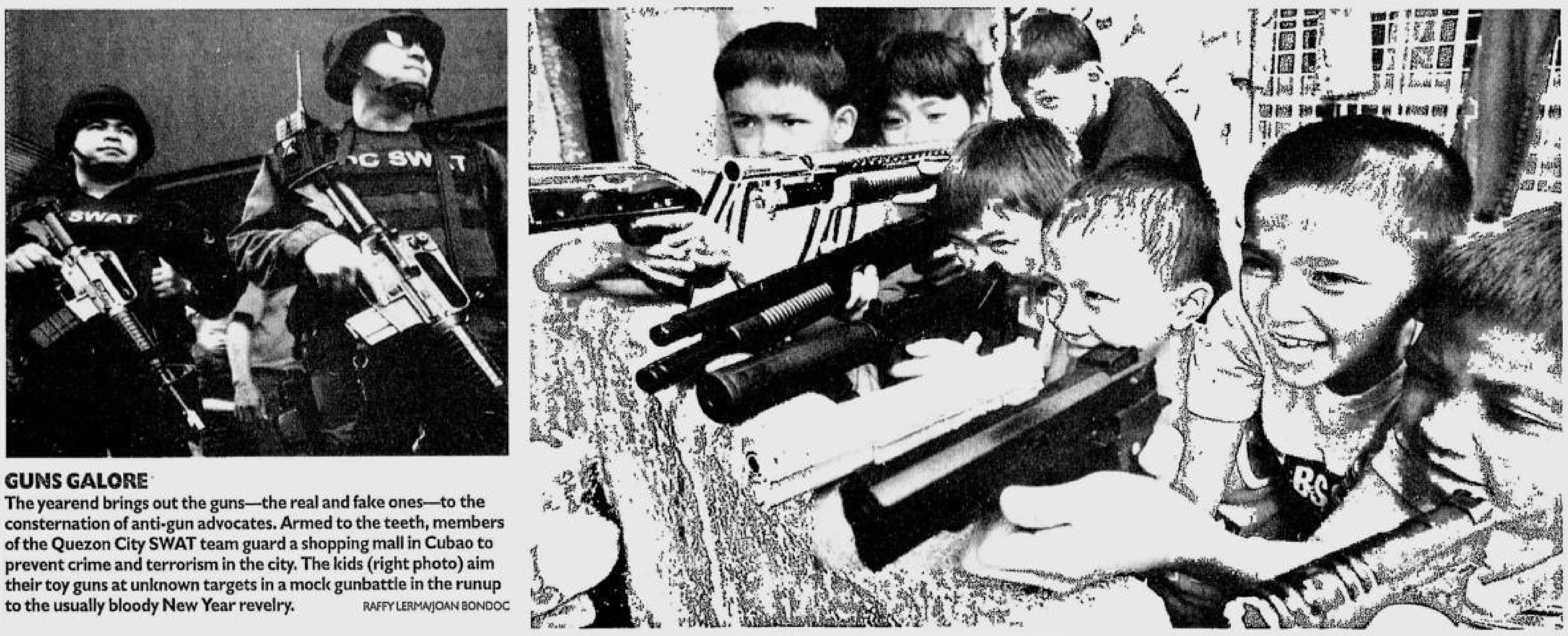
"Besides," he said, "legitimate carriers would not likely engage in illegal trade, which could endanger their own airlines," Santiago said.

Procedures, precaution

He said the dissemination of the information to other agencies and police forces was a precautionary measure.

"They're following their procedures. We are also going to follow all precautions to make sure all authorities locally are notified," he said.

Although Metro Police have been placed on full alert as the Rizal Day bombing anniversary approaches "we have not received any information about plots to bomb Metro Manila," Santiago said.



GUNS GALORE
The yearend brings out the guns—the real and fake ones—to the consternation of anti-gun advocates. Armed to the teeth, members of the Quezon City SWAT team guard a shopping mall in Cubao to prevent crime and terrorism in the city. The kids (right photo) aim their toy guns at unknown targets in a mock gunbattle in the runup to the usually bloody New Year revelry. RAFFY LERMA/JOAN BONDOC

NEW MEETING GROUND

Peace with Moro rebs seen

By Christine O. Avendano

A PEACE PACT BETWEEN the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) may be in sight by early next year after the Maguindanao-based rebel group reportedly softened its demand for the inclusion of more than 1,000 barangays in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said yesterday that according to government chief negotiator Silvestre Afable, they was now optimistic about the outcome of peace talks which will resume next year.

Afable had reported last week that the MILF had "mellowed" on its demand for ARMM annexation of more Muslim-dominated barangays.

The peace negotiations between the government and the MILF stalled on this point. It is the government's position that such annexation should first undergo a plebiscite in accordance to the Constitutional processes.

"They found a new meeting ground," Ermita said.

Asked whether the MILF was now inclined to accept that Constitutional requirement, Ermita said: "That's how I got it from Secretary Afable. The other side knows that the negotiations cannot proceed if it's not within our Constitutional processes."

"I was told that the MILF is no longer taking a hard-line position on [the annexation issue]."

Ermita opined that the MILF was taking this new position because Malaysian "arbitrators," had talked to them.

He recalled that Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi had assured President Arroyo during a bilateral meeting in China last October that Kuala Lumpur would continue to exert efforts to help reopen the peace talks.

Peace talks between the government and the original Moro National Liberation Front had led to the creation in 1989 of the ARMM, composed of Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Shariff Kabunsuan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi. The MILF, however, is a breakaway moro rebel group that did not accept the initial peace terms. Separate peace negotiations with them have be ongoing for almost a decade.

DILG chief orders fire inspections nationwide

By Norman Bordadora

INTERIOR SECRETARY RONALDO PUNO yesterday ordered a re-inspection of all commercial establishments nationwide to ensure owners' compliance with fire safety regulations.

Puno made the directive after a department store in Ormoc City burned down and killed 24 people on Christmas Day. *(Related story on Page A13)*.

In a memorandum to Bureau of Fire Protection, officer-in-charge Chief Supt. Jose Collado Puno ordered the BFP to review and confirm that these structures, especially highly populated enclosed areas, have adequate and fully functioning fire exits, fire alarms, smoke detectors and other fire safety equipment and facilities.

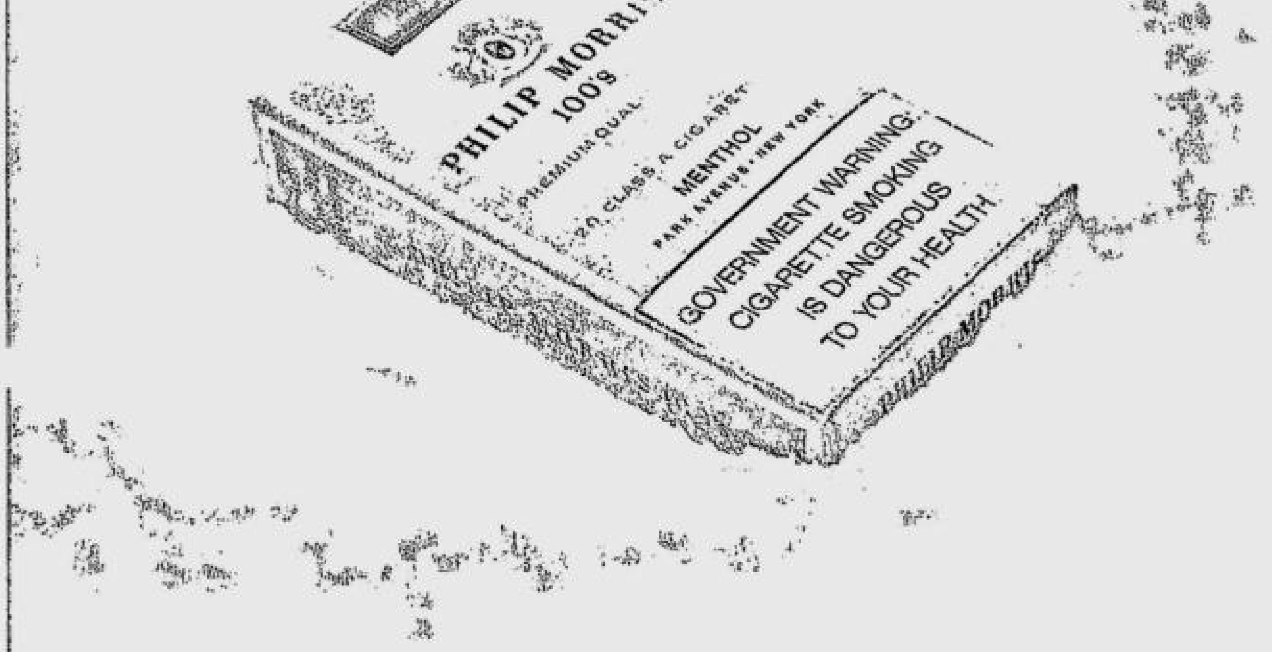
Puno also instructed all BFP regional directors and all district, city and municipal fire marshals across the country to closely coordinate with the Philippine National Police and local chief executives on the immediate "confiscation of fireworks and firecrackers being displayed or sold in violation of existing laws and ordinances, and initiate the criminal prosecution of violators."

Under the Fire Code, pyrotechnic materials should not be sold inside enclosed structures but only in open spaces.

"To avoid a repetition of the tragic fire which claimed the lives of 24 persons in Ormoc City, you are hereby directed to conduct a re-inspection of all commercial establishments to ensure compliance with the fire safety requirements of the Fire Code of the Philippines in view of the forthcoming New Year's Celebration," Puno said in his memorandum.

Puno told Collado to prioritize all shopping malls and ensure that their fire exits and fire suppression systems are fully operational.

The DILG chief also directed the BFP chief to tell shopping mall operators and vendors on the safe and proper handling, storage and display of pyrotechnic materials.



MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND
PEACE TO ALL.

Philip Morris 100's. Premium Taste in Menthol.

Government Warning: Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health

The bigger the belly, the higher the health risk, says new study

NEW YORK—THE MORE YOUR belly sticks out, the greater your risk of developing heart disease, a new study shows.

"The message is really obesity in the abdomen matters even more than obesity overall," Dr. Carlos Iribarren of Kaiser Permanente of Northern California in Oakland, the study's lead author, told Reuters Health.

Body mass index (BMI), a gauge of weight in relation to height, is a fairly crude way to judge a person's heart disease risk based on obesity, he noted. For example, muscular people may have a high BMI and be perfectly healthy.

In the current study, Iribarren and his team tested whether sagittal abdominal diameter, or SAD, which is the distance from the back to the upper abdomen midway between the top of the pelvis and the bottom of the ribs, would improve the accuracy of BMI in predicting heart disease risk.

Waist circumference is widely used to measure obesity in the abdominal area, Iribarren noted.

But while there are many ways to measure a person's waist, he added, SAD, which is evaluated by a doctor or nurse with a caliper, is much more standardized, and therefore probably less subject to error.

He and his colleagues looked at 101,765 men and women who underwent checkups between 1965 and 1970, which included SAD measurements, and were then followed for about 12 years.

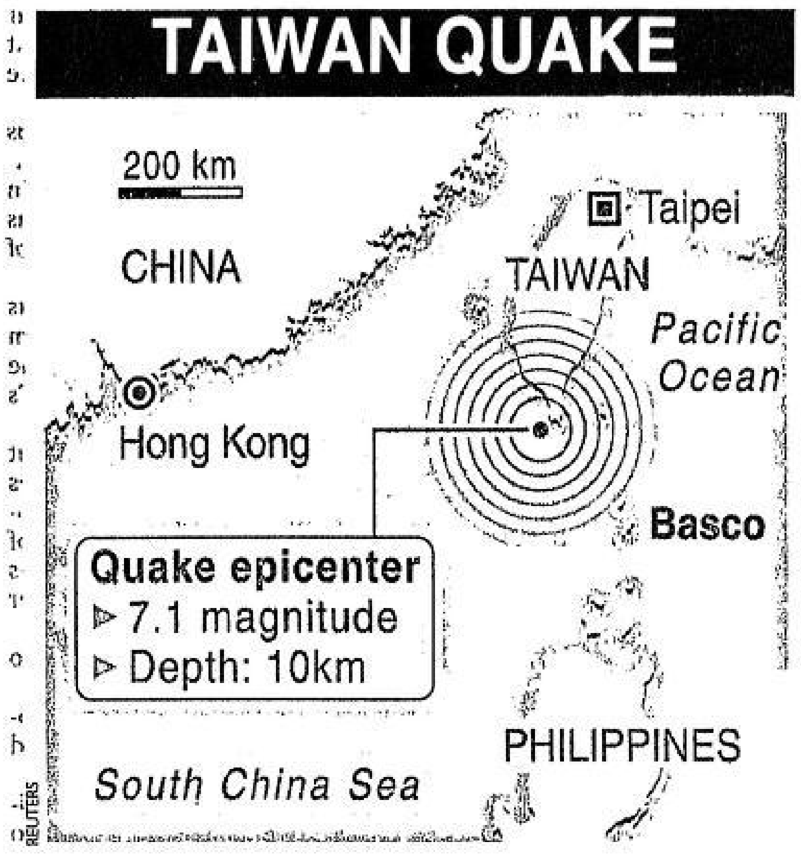
Men with the largest SAD were 42 percent more likely to develop heart disease during follow-up compared to those with the smallest SAD, while a large SAD increased heart disease risk by 44 percent for women, Iribarren and his team found.

Within BMI categories, the researchers found, heart disease risk rose with SAD; even among men of normal weight, heart disease risk was higher for those with bigger bellies.

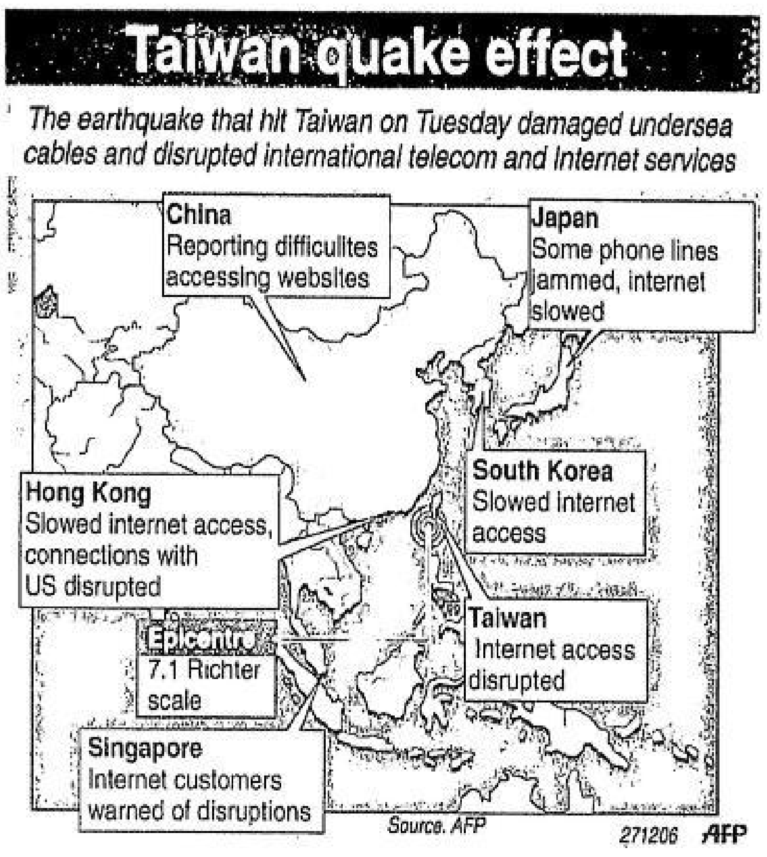
The relationship between SAD and heart disease risk was strongest among the youngest men and women, which is not surprising, Iribarren said, given that people who develop central obesity younger in life would likely have more serious problems.

"I think it has important implications for prevention," he said. "Don't let this happen to you when you're young, that's kind of the message."

Source: American Journal of Epidemiology, Dec. 15, 2006
Reuters



COLLAPSED HOUSE in southern Pingtung county in the southermost tip of Taiwan as three earthquakes hit the area on Tuesday killing at least two people. AFP


Taiwan quake effect
The earthquake that hit Taiwan on Tuesday damaged undersea cables and disrupted international telecom and Internet services
China
Reporting difficulites accessing websites
Japan
Some phone lines jammed, internet slowed
South Korea
Slowed internet access
Hong Kong
Slowed internet access, connections with US disrupted
Epicentre
7.1 Richter scale
Taiwan
Internet access disrupted
Singapore
Internet customers warned of disruptions
Source. AFP
271206 AFP

Quakes slow down Asia Internet service

From page A1

exodus of men, women and children from coastal villages.

Olalia said the scare started when a certain Romeo Cañete told neighbors a tsunami was going to hit the town.

Panic

It turned out that a relative of Cañete had called from London at 10 p.m. to warn him of a tsunami, Olalia said.

The call from London came after the Japanese meteorological body said that a one-meter-high tsunami was headed toward the Philippines.

"The neighbors panicked. The scare was aggravated by different versions that went around through text messages," Olalia said.

He said the police, local officials and priests tried to calm down the residents but they would not listen.

Trucks and jeepneys carried people 10 km away from the town while many more ran to the mountains. They returned home around daybreak.

Lone casualty

One person suffered a stroke because of the scare, Pasacao Mayor Lee Oliver said.

Olalia said the tsunami scare was fueled by the experience the people had in November when a big typhoon battered the town.

The Japanese agency's warning of a tsunami also sent villagers fleeing from coastal towns of Pangasinan, Cagayan and Batanes.

In Pangasinan, the municipal disaster coordinating council of Bolinao was immediately mobilized because residents were panicking.

Memories of 1979

Council chair Fred Castelo said he was instructed to alert coastal officials to evacuate residents at 9 p.m.

He said it was easy convincing people to evacuate because the town was also hit by big waves in 1979.

Most of the 3,000 residents of Cabongan village in the island town of Anda also heeded police warnings to move to high ground.

In Batanes, Gov. Vicente Gato asked the six mayors in the island-province to alert residents that huge waves might hit coastal areas.

In Ivana town, 13 km south of Basco, at least five families sought refuge in the houses of relatives.

Currency market affected

The disruptions in communication caused by Tuesday night's earthquakes also affected the currency market.

The main quake, measured at magnitude 7.1 by the US Geological Survey, struck off Taiwan at 1226 GMT on Tuesday (8:26 pm, Manila time). Two people were killed.

Submarine cables out

South Korea's top fixed-line and broadband service provider, KT Corp, said six submarine cables were knocked out.

"Twenty-seven of our customers were hit, including banks and churches," a KT spokesperson said. "It is not known yet when we can fully restore the services."

The foreign exchange market suffered in Seoul.

"Trading of the Korean won has mostly halted due to the communication problem," said a dealer at one domestic bank.

Tokyo also hit

Some disruption was also reported in the important Tokyo currency market but the EBS system that handles much dollar/yen trading appeared to be working.

Reuters Group Plc said users of its services in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan had been affected, although dealing services were restored in Tokyo during the afternoon.

In India, back offices and call centers experienced some difficulty, but industry officials said the full extent of the problem would not be known until later in the day when data and voice traffic peaked during European and US business hours.

State secrets

In China, financial markets worked normally but China Telecommunications Group, the country's biggest fixed-line telephone operator, said the Internet had been badly disrupted.

Phone links and dedicated business lines had also been affected to some degree, it said.

"Undersea communications cables fall in the area of state secrets," said a ministry of communications official in Beijing.

Worst affected

Chunghwa Telecom, Taiwan's biggest telecoms carrier, said two of four major undersea cables out of Taiwan had been affected, initially cutting more than half its international telecommunications capacity.

Calls to Southeast Asia were the worst affected, with less than 10 percent going through at 0500 GMT (1 pm in Manila)—an improvement from the morning, when less than 2 percent succeeded.

PCCW, Hong Kong's main fixed-line telecoms provider, said several undersea cables it partly owned had been damaged. "Data transfer is down by half," a spokesperson said.

Slow surfing

Both Singapore Telecommunications (SingTel), Southeast Asia's top phone company, and local rival StarHub Ltd., said Internet services were slow.

But SingTel said traffic was being diverted and repair work was in progress, adding: "Our submarine cables linking to Europe and the US are not affected." *Juan Escandor Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon; Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Juliet Cataluña, Gabriel Cardinoza and Estanislao Caldez, Inquirer Northern Luzon, and Reuters*

People believe angels are real, survey shows

From page A1

shared that faith. Belief in angels declined slightly with advanced education, from 87 percent of those with high school education or less to 73 percent of those with college degrees. Overall, 81 percent believed in angels.

- 86 percent believed in Santa as a child. And despite the multiethnic nature of the country, more than 60 percent of those with children at home consider Santa important in their holiday celebrations now.
- Nearly half, 47 percent, said Santa detracts from the religious significance of Christmas; over one-third, 36 percent, said he enhances the religious nature of the holiday.
- 91 percent of whites believed in Santa as a child; 72 percent of minorities did. One quarter of those now living in households with incomes under $25,000 did not believe in Santa.

The poll of 1,000 adults was conducted by telephone Dec. 12 to 14 by Ipsos, an international public opinion research company. The margin of sampling error for all adults was plus or minus 3 percentage points.

'Presence you feel'

If it's one thing to believe in angels, it's something else to explain exactly what an angel is.

"A presence that you feel around you, is my opinion," said Elizabeth Daves, 63, of Flemington, New Jersey. "I accept them—to come whenever they want to." And she said they came, and have comforted her, since her mother-in-law died in their house.

Edward Pelz, 80, of Grabill, Indiana, said he believes that angels are guiding him, even though it's impossible to explain to anyone else.

"Have I ever seen one? Nope. We depict an angel as a person that's white, has a robe on, has wings on back. I'm not sure that's the way they look. So for me, I think sometimes there's angels that aren't that way."

Pelz recounted a story about a man who showed up to change his tire when he had a flat in Ohio five years ago.

"I look at life—I say, well maybe I had an angel with me here today. It could have been just another man doing a good deed."

Selfless giving

Although Santa took knocks in the poll for diminishing the religious nature of the holiday, some grown-ups who considered him a benefit to the season cited the spirit of selfless giving that he represents.

"Now, if you are using Santa Claus to push a $100 robotic dinosaur, then that's a problem," said Ron Montgomery of Louisville, Kentucky. But the 64-year-old grandfather counts himself as a Santa believer to this day.

"It's the whole atmosphere," he said. "Santa Claus is the spirit. The trees, the church, the whole works. You actually see more of your neighbors.

"It's a feeling. It's not like a ghost. It's an attitude."

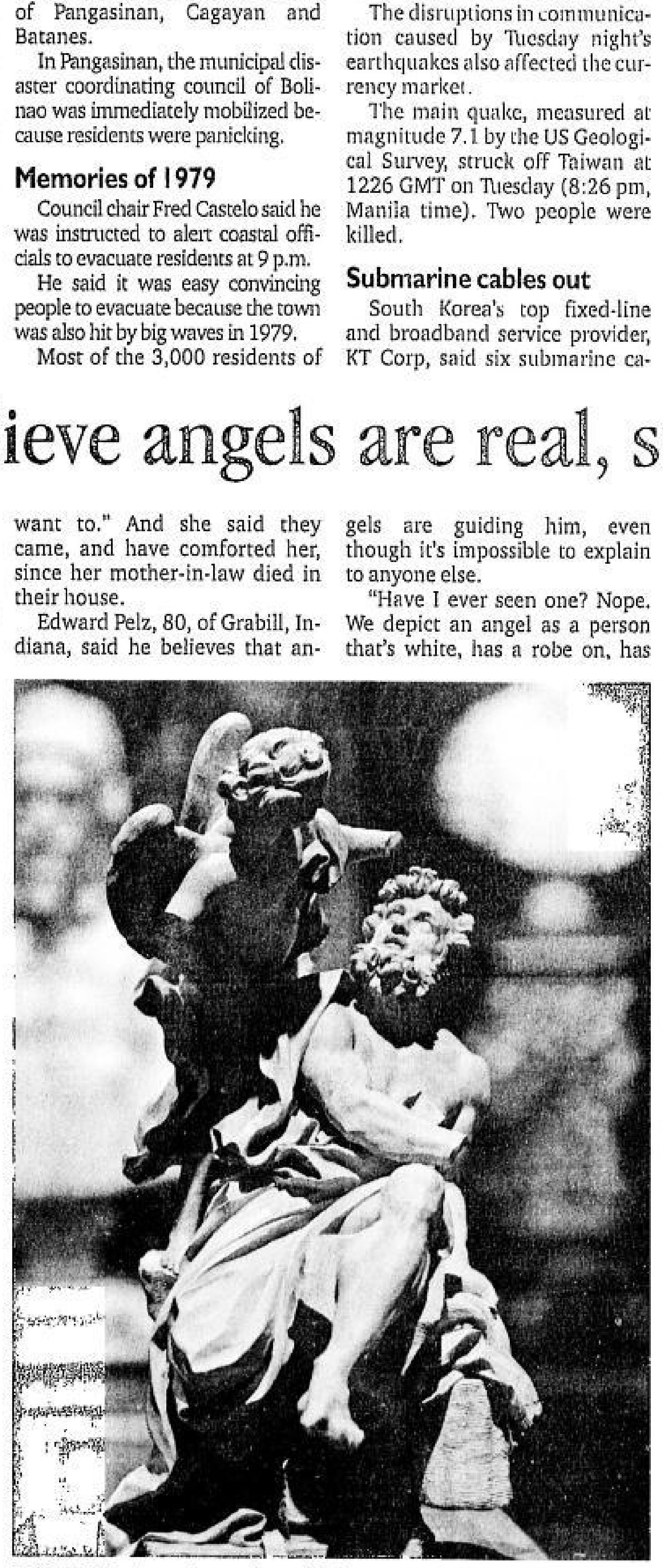
Bluebird in winter

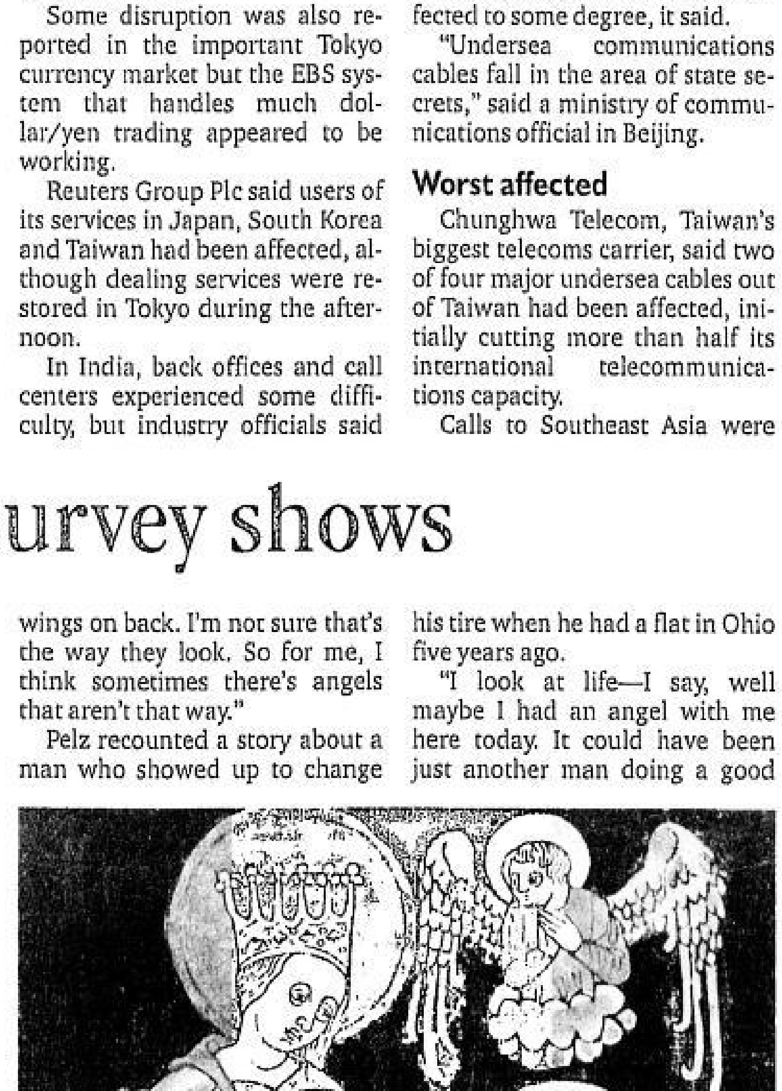
Pelz felt another spirit when he walked into his backyard on a winter's day—that of the wife he lost over two years ago. He called her Mom.

"She loved bluebirds," he said. "In the wintertime, we don't have bluebirds. I was out in the back, thinking, 'Mom I'd like to see you,' and this little bluebird comes by.

"I don't know, maybe that's an angel. It was just something I wanted to see. Maybe I imagined it. Next thing you know, it flew off. What is an angel? Is an angel something that has a heartbeat like us? Or is it ...?"

The thought trailed off. *AP*


BERNINI'S clay sculpture is on display at an exhibit in Milwaukee in this Feb. 1, 2006 photo. AP


ANGEL ON HIGH: Years before Johann Gutenberg printed the Bible, artists were decorating handbills printed with religious pictures such as an angel looking down on Mary and Jesus as she watches Joseph cooking. AP

RP, US likely to take second look at VFA

Backers bring gifts to jailed US soldier

By Tarra V. Quismundo

BEARING GIFTS, THEY TRAveled from within and outside Metro Manila to wish a jailed United States soldier well.

From as far away as Olongapo City, Pampanga and Cavite to as near as Quezon City, supporters of Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith began arriving at the Makati City Jail yesterday afternoon to offer gifts, letters and books to the Marine, convicted for raping a Filipino woman last year.

Delivering on their promised holiday celebration for Smith, members of the Justice for Dan Smith group also lit 23 candles for the soldier, representing each day that Smith has been incarcerated in the local jail.

"He is away from his family, his country, and he is pitiful so we have to help him. I am also a mother with children around his age, and it somehow feels painful for me too. I just want to know the truth," said Ligaya Tauro, 52, a wife of a Philippine Air Force colonel who came all the way from Sangley Point in Cavite.

Among the six women was Frelyn Smith, the 23-year-old wife of a retired US soldier based in the Philippines.

"He [her husband] wanted me to visit him [Daniel Smith] and give him books and a letter from him. He couldn't come here himself because he would only get emotional… He would cry whenever he sees him [on television]," said Frelyn.

She said her husband, Raymond John Smith, 63, believed Daniel John Smith was a relative. Her husband is from Chicago, Illinois, while Daniel Smith is from St. Louis, Missouri.

Aside from a food pack, Frelyn gave the detained soldier books on the military and politics.

"We are growing in numbers now. We have been receiving lots of e-mails from mothers, not just from teenagers, so nobody could claim that we are supporting him just because he is good-looking," said the group's organizer, Grace Santos.

"They would say we are being funded by the US Embassy, but how can that be when we don't even have a banner?" said Santos, apparently in reaction to statements from the camp of the rape victim, "Nicole."

By Christine O. Avendaño and Armand Nocum

THE PHILIPPINES AND THE UNITED States are likely to take a second look at the Visiting Forces Agreement but only after the custody issue involving a convicted US soldier has been resolved, according to Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

Malacañang, which takes Washington's position that custody of Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith should be with the US based on the provisions of the VFA, is apparently hoping that the dispute would be resolved before the New Year so Smith would not have to spend the holiday in the Makati City Jail.

Ermita said there has been as yet no discussions at Cabinet level on whether the VFA, a 1999 document governing the conduct and treatment of US troops participating in joint military exercises here, should be reviewed and renegotiated because of the custody dispute over Smith, which has led to the US canceling war games with the Philippines next year.

He said that for now the Executive was waiting for the Court of Appeals to decide on the petitions on the issue before it.

"After this issue is resolved, I am very sure that both our governments, through the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and the US through their embassy here, may have some thoughts about taking a look at it, review it very well because we do not want similar things to happen in the future," Ermita told reporters.

He said launching a review of the VFA now might just complicate the custody issue.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said that not even a revision of the VFA would effect the transfer of Smith to Philippine custody as an amendment to the law cannot be made to take effect retroactively.

He said the custody issue should not even be discussed at this point because the conviction of Smith was not yet final.

"If some sectors want Smith turned over to Philippine custody, then they should seek its amendment in the VFA. But right now that is the provision of the law. Even if you amend that, it cannot retroact," the justice secretary said.

Invoking the country's treaty commitments, the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Office of the Solicitor General filed a petition before the appellate court seeking the transfer of Smith from the Makati City Jail to the US Embassy's custody.

Smith had been detained at the Makati City Jail since he was convicted early this month of raping a Filipina in Subic last year.

Smith's lawyer has also filed a petition with the CA, arguing that under the provisions of the VFA, the US Marine should be placed under US custody while his case was on appeal.

"Hopefully today, not later than Friday, we should be able to get a final resolution on the custody [issue]," Ermita said.

But the only action that the appellate court has so far made on the petitions of the government and of Smith for transfer of custody as well as an opposing motion filed by the rape victim is to stamp them as "Noted."

Solicitor General Eduardo Nachura remains hopeful that the CA will find merit in the government's position and act on the OSG petition before the year ends so Smith would not spend the passing of the year in jail.

Citing the VFA provision, Nachura said the custody of any US personnel over whom the Philippines is to exercise jurisdiction should be with the US military authorities, if they so request, from the commission of the offense until completion of all judicial proceedings.

"The US authority retains such custody until all judicial proceedings against Smith shall have terminated, except when the US authorities themselves, in the meantime, revoke it," Nachura said.

He said Makati Judge Benjamin Pozon had unjustly assumed and exercised this prerogative of revocation.

US stands to lose more with war games suspension

By Dona Pazzibugan

THE UNITED STATES ALSO STANDS TO lose when it decided to cancel the joint war games with the Philippines scheduled for next year, according to a spokesperson for the Philippine military.

Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro Jr. said US troops who participate in the annual "Balikatan" exercises learn much from Filipino soldiers in terms of jungle warfare, while the Americans train their Filipino counterparts in the use of the latest military weapons and gadgets.

"It's an exchange of training. They teach us the use of modern equipment. We teach them survival. They gain from training us in the same way we gain from training them. It's symbiotic," Bacarro said.

The US military announced on Dec. 22 that it was canceling the "Balikatan" exercises scheduled for February in protest at a Philippine lower court's refusal to yield custody of Marine Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, who was convicted of raping a Filipina in the former Subic US naval base last year.

Makati Judge Benjamin Pozon sent Smith to the Makati City Jail last Dec. 4, and has since rejected an agreement between the US and Philippine governments that custody of Smith belonged to the US while the appeal process was going on.

The Philippine government has since petitioned the Court of Appeals to order Pozon to turn over Smith to the US Embassy.

Bacarro said the Philippines would also be missing much in terms of training and "interoperability opportunities" with the cancellation of the war games.

"We are both affected. They also have something to lose in terms of training opportunity. It has been acknowledged that our soldiers are among the best fighters because we have a long-running insurgency problem. We impart basic guerrilla warfare and survival skills. There are a lot of positive points that they can learn from us," he said.

But once the issues that led to the suspension are cleared, he said the exercises would resume.

The Balikatan exercises scheduled for February would have involved more than 4,000 US troops and 3,000 Filipino troops.

Bacarro said the suspension of the joint exercises with the US would not affect the military's operations against the Abu Sayyaf kidnap gang in Sulu.

Billboards reprieve to expire soon—DPWH

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE MONTH-LONG REPRIEVE FOR billboard owners will end soon, and the Department of Public Works and Highways yesterday warned that it would resume the dismantling of illegal and unsafe billboards in January.

The DPWH stopped its billboards removal operations in December in order not to aggravate the holiday traffic situation, but Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. said there was a need to resume the dismantling soon in the interest of public safety.

Ebdane appealed to billboard owners to take the initiative and double-check the structural integrity of their outdoor advertisements and to see to it that they have the necessary permits.

Violation

The DPWH began tearing down billboards found to be in violation of the National Building Code and other regulations and pose a public hazard shortly after Typhoon "Milenyo" swept into the country in September.

Milenyo left in its wake several toppled billboards, causing destruction to property and even one death.

Order

Following the devastation, President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the DPWH to assess the billboards situation nationwide and dismantle those found to be in violation of the law.

The DPWH has so far inspected 13,925 billboards nationwide and dismantled 8,291 of them. In Metro Manila, 2,745 unsafe and illegal billboards have already been torn down.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, December 28, 2006
Holy Innocents, Martyrs

1st Reading: 1 Jn 1:5-2:2
Gospel: Matthew 2:13-18

After the wise men had left, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you for Herod will soon be looking for the child in order to kill him."

Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and left that night for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. In this way, what the Lord had said through the prophet was fulfilled: I called my son out of Egypt.

When Herod found out that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was furious. He gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its neighborhood who were two years old or under. This was done in line with what he had learned from the wise men about the time when the star appeared.

In this way, what the prophet Jeremiah had said was fulfilled: A cry is heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation: Rachel weeps for her children. She refuses to be comforted, for they are no more.

Commentary

God is light. There is no darkness in God, but there are many who still choose the dark, choose violence over light and life. John writes to his little ones, beloved of God, telling them to ask for forgiveness and to remember that they live in the presence of God and Jesus who is just. And we remember the blood of the innocents, the little ones that have been butchered because they were bound to the Child. Just geographic proximity to this Child can be dangerous because the powerful of the world still hate and resist the Word made flesh among us. Who are the innocents suffering today because we sin and refuse to be the children of light?

Claretian Publications Inc., 8 Mayumi St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City, UP P.O. Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City; Tel.: 921-3984; Fax: 921-7429; E-mail: cci@claret.org; Websites: http://www.bible.claret.org (Claretian Publications Inc.) & http://missionaries.claret.org (Claretians in the Philippines)

idac ®
AIR RECONDITIONING
The New Split Type Aircon
Wall-Mounted
1hp-P16,500
1.5hp-P18,500, 2hp-P25,000
2.5hp-P30,000, 4hp-P43,000
Floor Mounted
3hp-P39,500 5hp-P55,000
Ceiling Mounted 3hp-P39,500
Ceiling Cassette 3hp-P50,000
Free Installation!
Call:243-2610,241-4731,(0919)2482183
Available at: MC Home Depot / Fort & Ortigas
Cebu-(032)3465498 Davao-(082)2358821

PASEGURUHAN NG MGA NAGLILINGKOD SA PAMAHALAAN
(GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM)
Financial Center, Pasay City, Metro Manila 1308

December 8, 2006

ADVISORY TO ALL GSIS OLD-AGE PENSIONERS:

Starting January 1, 2007, your monthly pension will be credited to your GSIS eCard account. This means that you must use your GSIS eCard in order to withdraw your monthly pension in any ATM nationwide.

GSIS will no longer use checks to deliver your pensions but will electronically credit them directly to your GSIS eCard account.

Thereafter, monthly pensions will be credited in your GSIS eCard account every 1st day of the month.

For pensioners without eCard, you are now enjoined to enroll at the GSIS home office or the nearest GSIS servicing office immediately to avoid suspension of your pension payments.

Please be guided accordingly.

Winston F. Garcia
President and General Manager

By the Sea RESORT OLONGAPO
Beach Hotel and Restaurant
"Your Christmas Home Away from Home"
FREE Breakfast Promo for Overnight Room Stay In:
Garden • Executive • Double Deluxe • Seafront • Suite
Promo runs until February 28, 2007
Per DTI - ZPO Permit No. 38 Series of 2006
REASONABLE OVERNIGHT ROOM RATES:

Regular Rooms	1,200.00
Bayside Rooms	1,500.00
Garden Rooms	2,500.00
Seafront/Executive	2,800.00
Double Deluxe	3,400.00
Suite Rooms	3,950.00
Vacation Villa-3bedroom house	7,800.00

For inquiries, call Tel. Nos.: (047) 222-4560 / 222-2888 / 223-4346
E-mail: bythesea@greendot.com.ph / inquiry@bythesea.com.ph
Web: http://www.bythesea.com.ph

光群雷射科技股份有限公司
K LASER TECHNOLOGY INC
Holographic Tamper Evident Sticker
Features:
- Self adhesive
- 2D/3D/Stereogram
- Tamper Evident
- Serial Number
- Customizable
Uses:
- Clearances
- Security ID
- Diploma Seals
- Stock Certificates
- Passports
- Brand Protection
K Laser (Philippines) 376-2107 0917-535-0373 #037 EDSA MESU Bldg Q.C

Send resumés instantly
Visit us at www.jobmarketonline.com
JOB Market

The best in pyromusical shows!
STARMAKER
FIREWORKS & SPECIAL EFFECTS
WE WELCOME DEALERS
FACTORY PRICE . FREE DELIVERY
For inquiries, pls. call tel. # 7003596
Mobile # 09178903168 / 09209000822
Website: www.starmakerfireworks.com
Email: starmakerfireworks888@gmail.com

ISSN 0116-2642 INQUIRER Vol. 22 No. 20

OPINION

Email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph website: http://www.inq7.net
Text us your feedback: inquirer opi name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.
•Subscription Hotline 896-6000
•100% soy ink•

Avoidable tragedy

EDITORIAL

IT WAS AN ACCIDENT, NO DOUBT. WHETHER IT was an exploding firecracker thrown by a panicky boy or a toy laser gun he aimed at a pile of pyrotechnics that set it off, no one is saying there was criminal intent in the fire that razed the Unitop Department Store and killed 25 people in Ormoc City on Christmas Day. What is less certain is whether the tragedy—the worst in living memory caused by pyrotechnics—could not have been prevented or at least minimized.

Thus, it comes as a rude surprise to hear a top official of the Bureau of Fire Protection boasting about the capabilities of the people they have in Ormoc. "We have well-trained, skilled and capable members of the BFP in Ormoc, and we hope to get the result of their investigation tomorrow," the BFP chief for operations, Chief Supt. Enrique Linsangan, promised Wednesday.

If putting together quickly a detailed report on the incident is the measure of the training, skills and capability of the members of the BFP, it should not serve as a reassurance to anyone. Instead it should be cause for alarm.

Certainly, the authorities should act swiftly to determine who was responsible for the fire and its grim aftermath. Initial findings, for instance, seemed to show that the store had no permit to sell pyrotechnics. It has also been reported that the rear exit had been padlocked, and one version even had it that the store owner had it locked to prevent looters from carting off goods. Linsangan himself said that investigators would try to find out if the building had adequate exits. They would also investigate reports that the building was not equipped with sprinklers and fire extinguishers as required by the Building Code, he said.

But like President Macapagal-Arroyo's latest order to clamp down on the illegal sale of firecrackers, all this leaves everyone feeling that the authorities are once more closing the barn after the horse is gone. What are supposed to be precautionary measures will be turned into key components of a postmortem. The failure to carry out requirements intended to help save lives will be used to explain why lives were lost.

Guess who are supposed to enforce compliance with these safety measures. The same people who are investigating the cause of the fire: the "well-trained, skilled and capable members of the BFP." The irony is probably lost on them that had they used those skills, training and capability to enforce the Building Code and safety regulations, they would not have a fire to investigate. Are they not responsible, too, for causing the deaths of 25 people and the destruction of property worth a few millions?

Instead of blowing their horn, they should be beating their breasts. Ultimately, they should be made to answer for the deaths they have indirectly caused by their negligence. But then who will investigate the investigators?

It seems that people cannot count on the BFP for protection against fire, as its name and its functions say. As with almost everything else, everyone has been served notice to look out for himself when it comes to ensuring his own safety against fire.

But if anything good could come from this tragedy, it is to remind everyone that toys and tools for celebration can be instruments of death and destruction. It is a sad but timely reminder as the nation prepares for the noisiest—and usually the bloodiest, too—celebration of the year on New Year's Eve.

Tokyo's move

FOREIGN COMMENT

A TWO-DAY "STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DIALOGUE" WAS HELD between the United States and China last week, the first such session ever held to exchange views on the two countries' respective economic management and systems.

Underlying this move is the idea that while trade problems do exist, the relationship between China and the United States could be stabilized through greater mutual economic dependence, and that this could also improve their security relations.

For stability and prosperity in East Asia, we heartily welcome a Beijing-Washington dialogue. But is there sufficient dialogue between Tokyo and Washington, and Tokyo and Beijing?

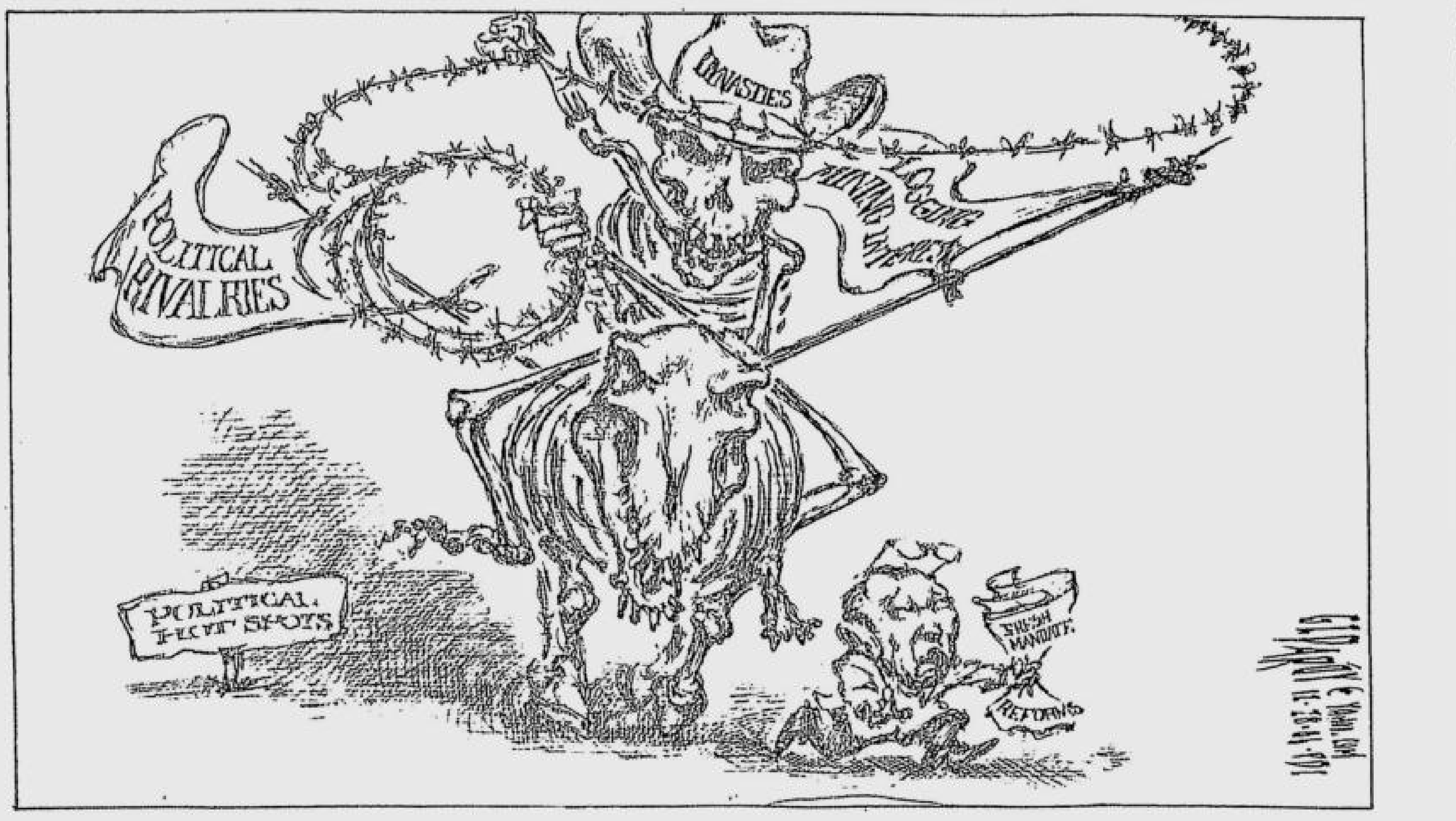
Japan should not remain a mere onlooker while China and the United States strengthen their ties. Tokyo must come up with its own strategy and propose Cabinet-level sessions for economic dialogue with Washington and Beijing. *Asahi Shimbun (Tokyo)*

Publisher ISAGANI YAMBOT
Editor in Chief LETTY JIMENEZ-MAGSANOC
Managing Editor JOSE MA. D. NOLASCO
Associate Editor ABELARDO S. ULANDAY
Associate Editor for Readership ROSARIO A. GARCELLANO
News Editor ARTEMIO T. ENGRACIA JR. • *Chief, News Day Desk* NILO B. PAUROM
Opinion Editor JORGE V. ARUTA
National Editor PERGENTINO B. BANDAYREL JR.
Senior Desk Editor JUAN V. SARMIENTO JR.
Editorial Consultant AMANDO DORONILA
Chief Photographer ERNIE U. SARMIENTO
Art & Design Director LYNETT A. VILLARIBA

Board Chairman MARIXI R. PRIETO
President ALEXANDRA PRIETO-ROMUALDEZ
Executive Vice President DAVID O. VALDES
Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing RENATO R. REINOSO
VP for Advertising FELIPE R. OLARTE
AVP for Circulation SANDY SIMON R. YAP

Readers' Advocate LORNA KALAW TIROL
readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph • Tel. No. 897-8808, Loc. 342

All rights reserved. Except as permitted by law, no part of the Philippine Daily Inquirer may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means stored in a database or retrieval system without its prior written permission.



Subtle massacre

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

TOMORROW'S "FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOcents" is a day of good-natured leg-pulling—an "observance" that was imported from Spain, via the galleons sailing from Mexico to Manila. But it had roots in the Middle East.

Travel-weary Magis, Matthew tells us, questioned Herod about a new born King. "We've seen his star rising in the east and come to honor him." The Magis, however, didn't buy Herod's offer of fake fealty. Instead, they "returned to their home country by another way." A ballistic Herod ordered his soldiers to salvage all boy toddlers, below two years of age, in Bethlehem.

But why do Filipinos treat this bloodletting as April-Fool's-Day-in-December? In Iberian countries, pranksters and fooled are dubbed: *inocentes*. Both are expected to see the humor. A people who joke even in the worst of times, Filipinos embraced this joshing with gusto.

"A joke is a serious thing," Winston Churchill warned. And the continuing massacre of the guiltless is anything but a joke. An INQUIRER editorial, for example, excoriated the unresolved killings of journalists, activists, political leaders. "If all sides view human right abuses as something only the other side commits, and therefore for which each side believes it is never answerable ... we will have only more slain innocents."

Tiny wooden coffins, however, don't make it to the front pages or to primetime TV. But the failure to bring down infant mortality rates reveals the invisible massacre of innocents here. Child survival is one of the most sensitive indicators of human welfare," notes the United Nation's "Human Development Report."

A people of short memories, few of us now recall that "the steady decline in Philippine infant death rates stalled in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s," the World Bank and Asian Development Bank noted in their joint study titled "Improving Early Childhood Development."

"This paralleled a period during the Marcos government," the banks pointed out. "Econonic growth stagnated. And there was underinvestment in child survival intervention." Out of every 1,000 live births then, 63 died. In emerging Singapore, the reported fatalities, for that period, were already down to 10.

The bludgeons were poverty, chronic hunger, polluted water, shoddy sanitation, patchy health services. Children succumbed mostly to preventable diseases: anemia, diarrhea, bronchitis, flu, etc. Yet, these ailments were "treatable with cheap simple technologies" at a time when funds were being poured, willy-nilly, into white elephants, like the Coconut Palace or the (haunted?) Film Center.

"A cry was heard at Ramah, sobbing and loud lamentation," Jeremiah wailed centuries before the Bethlehem bloodletting. "Rachel, bewailing her children. No comfort for her since they were no more."

Protein-energy malnutrition sends more preschool children in the Philippines to premature graves than it does in poorer countries like Egypt, Kenya, Tanzania or Zimbabwe, ADB and World Bank noted. Halving the incident of protein-energy malnutrition would save 37,000 infants yearly.

But the censored media then squelched any whimper in the dictatorship's "City of Man." Imelda Marcos "is unrepentant about the millions she spent on a 21-year shopping spree," the Guardian's Jonathan Watts writes. "Extravagance was their philosophy .... The governor of the Central Bank would beg my husband for money, and he would give millions," (Imelda says). Yes, but how much money did you have, I persist. "A lot," she smiles. And how much gold? "A lot," she laughs.

People Power lifted the censorship that swept under the rug this serial murder of infants. Democratic space now allows media to track improvements that still fall far short of the potential. How well are we doing in this task?

Increased funding by the Aquino and Ramos governments rehabilitated a wide range of public health services, ADB and World Bank observed. The drunken excesses of the Estrada administration made an empty shibboleth of *Erap Para sa Mahirap* slogan.

By 1998, Filipino infant mortality dropped to 57. And today, it is 26—a vast improvement from the 63 deaths of the Marcos years. We are on par with Egypt, Peru and Western Samoa. But Thailand has whittled down its infant deaths to 18, and Korea to 5. This gap shows innocents continue to die needlessly here.

President Macapagal-Arroyo faces a historically-unprecedented onus: The Local Government Code has funneled to local officials new levels of tax revenues. The LGUs have a unique capacity to stretch out safety nets for children.

Out of every 100 kids, 28 are malnourished and underweight, compared to 11 in Malaysia. Singaporeans and Chinese are taller than our children since chronic hunger stunts 32 percent of them. Only six out of ten women giving birth are attended by skilled medical personnel—a far cry from China's nine. The list can go on.

Many LGU officials allocate honoraria for themselves first. This sordid pattern prevails from Dumaguete to Pinamungajan, Consolacion and Lapu-Lapu in Cebu, the Commission on Audit reports. They can stop the massacre of innocents. But like Herod of old, they have proven "deaf to the sigh of orphans and drank the tears of children."

The approach of elections is ratcheting up the pressure for President Arroyo to let the LGUs keep on plundering local treasuries. If the massacre of innocents is to stop, the LGUs must, like the Magi, "return to their home country by another way"—by giving children their places at the table.

(Email: juanlmercado@gmail.com)

Blast from the past

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THERE ARE FOUR VERY GOOD REASONS why I'm sharing with you something Jose Rizal wrote more than a century ago. The first is that it is Rizal Day a couple of days from now, a day we would do well to remember with some gratefulness. I do not know why there should be any debate about whether Rizal or Andres Bonifacio should be the national hero. Both easily qualify as so. You can't get any more heroic than facing a firing squad for your beliefs at the prime of your life while knowing you are by no means a mediocre specimen of your race.

Of course, some people prefer to show their gratitude by vowing on Rizal's Day not to cling to power, but doing so anyway, but that's another story.

The second is that, as this particular essay shows, Rizal was not at all the solemn type his paintings and statues show him to be. He had a mischievous wit to go with an acerbic pen. His satirical writings, of which this is a prime example, show him to be full of irreverence which, more than his diatribes, is what probably pissed off the Spaniards. I half suspect that the younger generation in particular would have a better appreciation of the man if his halo was tucked in the corner for a while.

The third is that Rizal, who had a sharp eye for the foibles of the *indio*, might as well be speaking to us directly in this essay. This piece has to do with a hypothetical *indio* debating with himself whether to side with the friars or the people opposing them, which is not unlike our times. His dilemma is one we can easily sympathize with, or laugh bitterly at in painful recognition.

The fourth and most important reason is that this is the time of year when my thoughts are neither suicidal nor homicidal but libational, when my arms turn to lead, and pounding on the keyboard to produce gems of wisdom takes on the aspect of one of the more serious labors of Hercules.

So Rizal to the rescue. The title of his piece is "Reflections of a Filipino," written sometime in 1884. This is a much cut-up version:

"What are the advantages of being anti-friar?

"Nothing really. The more I analyze it, the more I find it silly and imprudent. This thing of struggling so that the country may progress ... the country will progress or not, without me. What do I care if the coming generation enjoys more or less freedom than I? The point is the present. The point is that I, my Number One, do not have a bad time. A bird in hand is worth two in the bush, says a proverb. Charity begins at home, says another. Here I have two proverbs in my favor and not even half a proverb against me ....

"What do I care if the friars do not want the education of the country? They must have a reason. I agree with them. Since I was a child, I had a hard time going to school and a harder time getting out of it ....

"That the friars oppose the teaching of Spanish, what is the matter with that? What do we need Spanish for? ... If it were Latin, I say good. The curate says God listens first to the prayers in Latin, which is why curates live in abundance and we Tagalogs are badly off. But Spanish? To understand the insults and swearing of the *guardia civil*? It is enough to understand the language of the butt of guns .... And what use is Spanish to us since we are forbidden to reply? ....

"They say the friars have many women and paramours, even married ones .... I say if one can have two, three, or four women, why should he not have them? Women are to blame. Besides there is something good about the curate. He does not let his paramours die of hunger, as many men do, but supports them, dresses them, and supports their families .... Frankly speaking, if I were a woman and had to prostitute myself, I would do so to a curate ....

"But what if the liberals win?

"History says that the Catholics took advantage of the night when the heretics were gathered in Paris on St. Bartholomew's Day and assassinated them .... What if the anti-friar Filipinos, fearing that the friars might do to them what they did in France, take heed of this lesson and do it first? Holy God! Misfortune of misfortunes! What would then become of me if I side with the friars?

"Every Filipino prisoner or exile opens the eyes of one hundred Filipinos and wins as many for his party. If they could hang all the Filipinos and leave only the friars and me to enjoy the country, that would be best. But then I will be the slave of all of them! What is to be done? Liberalism is a seed that never dies. Decidedly I will remain neutral. Virtue lies in the middle ground.

"Yes, I will be neutral. What does it matter to me if vice or virtue should triumph if I will be on the side of the vanquished? The point is to win. Wait for the figs to ripen and then gather them. See which party is going to win, and when they are intoning the hymn, join them and sing louder than the rest. I will insult the vanquished, make gestures, rant loudly so that the others will believe in my ardor and the sincerity of my convictions. Here's true wisdom! Let the fools and the Quixotes allow themselves to be killed so that their ideals may triumph ....

"Let the friars win, let the liberals win. I will come to an understanding afterward with the victors. What do I care about the native land, human dignity, progress, patriotism? All that is worthless if I have no money."

The event we celebrate a couple of days from now, of course, shows that that damned Rizal never had this dilemma. Or that if he had it at the point of death, he resolved it heroically—and poetically (remember "Mi Ultimo Adios?"), if not wittily. Ponder his words and hope to God (and him) we can find our way to having one truly happy new year next year.

Unbroken in mind and spirit

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

FOR SOME YEARS NOW, NCCA (NATIONAL Commission on Culture & Arts) Executive-Director Cecile Alvarez and I have always tried to cap our Sunday program on dyRH with truly heartwarming and meaningful stories at the end of each year. Last year, we featured the heroic struggle of two disabled young women to become productive. The year before, we interviewed professor Onofre Pagsanghan of the Ateneo, who has been rightly called the "teacher's teacher."

This year, I requested Assistant Solicitor-General Karl B. Miranda, who has been doing volunteer work among the prisoners in Muntinlupa for over three years now, to arrange for us a dialogue with some of them. He got Cecile and me to meet the inmates of the medium-security compound of the New Bilibid Prison, and what a meeting it turned out to be.

Dr. Ralph Brower, a visiting political science professor from the University of Florida and his wife, Nancy, a psychologist who has done work among prisoners in the United States, joined us at Karl's invitation. But instead of just a dialogue, the inmates staged a cultural program for us, where their choir sang some numbers, including an original composition and another group staged a drama on "prison without walls." We got enough materials for two shows. The cultural program was aired one Dec. 24 and the dialogued will be broadcast on New Year's Eve.

* * *

The inmates we met were mostly enrolled in the educational extension program run inside the prison compound by the University of Perpetual Help of Las Piñas. They were men, mostly between 30 and 45, with wives and children or parents living in various parts of the country. Their songs were lively and well-rehearsed and they had good voices. Cecile immediately saw the prospect of having them trained professionally, so that they could perhaps cut a disc or two with some sexy title, like "Voices from Within the Walls," that could give the families they left back home some income. Their acting had a lot of flair and was highly charged. The lead actor, a young man named Chris Araneta, who was convicted of carrying an infinitesimal amount of drugs, shed tears. The inmates seemed to enjoy what they were doing, and displayed a lot of esprit de corps.

* * *

What impressed me most was the extension program run by Perpetual Help. As explained by Miranda and Rexy Morales, a highly dedicated master's degree holder (psychology) who has worked in the prison since the early 1980s and oversees the education program, over 250 prisoners are enrolled in the four-year college program in business management. But they are only part of some 1,000 prisoners enrolled, some in elementary and others in high school, all financed by the government. The college program is geared to the reality that one day they will return to society where jobs may not be easy to come by. It is augmented by workshops and seminars conducted by the University of the Philippines' Institute of Small Scale Industries. In addition, the National College of Public Administration and Governance, in conjunction with the UNDP, runs a leadership-training program for the "*mayores*" (leaders in the inmates' hierarchy) which is said to be the first in the world.

Many graduates who have to continue serving their sentences end up teaching in the prison secondary or elementary school. One "professor" is the cheerful president of the college students' council, Erwin Panes, who was convicted at age 17 and has already put in 17 years.

* * *

Miranda, 48, who holds a degree in business management from the Ateneo and a law degree from the UP and did post-graduate studies at the Kennedy School of Government in Harvard University, is only one of the volunteers working among the inmates. Another was Lorenzo Tañedo, son of a PLDT vice president, who taught English and Math until he left to enroll at the Harvard School of Education.

Equally impressive is the roster of speakers Miranda has invited to address them. Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales has said Mass for them and spoke about Pondong Pinoy. Washington Sycip regaled them with a story about how his own father, Albino Sycip, was also an "alumnus" of Bilibid (the Japanese detained him there during the war and learned to plant vegetables there). Henry Sy promised to market their handicrafts at his malls. Nelly Favis-Villafuerte, former trade undersecretary and now Monetary Board member, sent welders to train them. The Manila Philharmonic Orchestra under conductor Rodel Colmenar has performed there, and the inmates loved it.

* * *

Listening to their hopes and dreams, their heartaches and pains (the biggest pain is being away from their loved ones during this season) and life inside the walls, I began to understand what rehabilitation is all about: why death penalty serves no noble purpose. The inmates are happy and in high morale because their minds and spirit are unbroken, and they have something to live for. As they noted, there are many people outside who are also in a prison—without walls.

Miranda acknowledges the enlightened rehabilitation policy of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and Prisons Director Vicente Vinarao.

I spoke to the inmates about Ninoy Aquino and how he overcame seven years of solitary confinement by turning to God and reading nearly 3,000 books. I also recounted the true story of an American prisoner who spent his long sentence studying birds and became one of the foremost authorities on them. I promised to send them the film "Birdman of Alcatraz," starring Burt Lancaster. (Interestingly the young inmates had never heard of this actor.)

The beauty of it all is that their spirit is whole and they are busy trying to rehabilitate themselves. By the way, the librarian is asking for more books and magazines as his fellow inmates do a lot of reading.

A Christmas song for Raymond

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

If I'd make a wish for Christmas/Each day would be like Christmas night/When we put aside our fighting/Find the warmth that comes from giving/When the rushing world slows down for once/To share a song of joy/Then the noise will fade/Weary hearts will find themselves at ease/Throughout the world, all men will learn/To live in Christmas peace/If I'd make a wish for Christmas/Each man would be more like a child/Hearts that marvel at the small things/Love and laughter everlasting/And a worldwide wonder as we raise our eyes/To a million shining stars/Only then will we see the Baby Jesus in our hearts/What a miracle, the Heavenly King born in our hearts… If I'd make a wish for Christmas…

A BOY WITH AUTISM, A YOUNG VOLUNTEER, students and professionals with music in their hearts, a group that spreads the good news—all with hopes for quiet and peace in the land. Something beautiful was at work among them.

And so a Christmas song was born.

Some years ago, Marchan Padla, a young volunteer at Ang Arko ng Pilipinas, a l'Arche community that cares for mentally handicapped persons, wrote lyrics and a melody for a song. It was a song he dedicated to Raymond, an autistic boy who has become an inspiration to many who have come his way.

This song found its way to Hangad, a group of students and young professionals bound by their desire to know God and who, through their music, help others know God. Hangad's music is recorded and distributed by the Jesuit Communications Foundations (JCF).

Marchan told Hangad that he wrote the song at the height of anti-Muslim violence during the Estrada administration. He titled the song "Raymond's Lullaby." This was to honor the boy with autism. Raymond could not stand the Christmas holiday noise in the city, he had to be brought somewhere else every time the noise was too much for him. Autistic persons are generally very sensitive to sound and cannot stand noise at high levels. But Raymond is more than the sum total of his autistic self. Proof of this is the song that came to life.

"Raymond's Lullaby" is the lead track of Hangad's Christmas album "A Wish for Christmas." Hangad (www.hangad.com) and JCF hope to raise funds for Arko and make people aware of Arko (www.angarkongpilipinas.com) and its mission to serve those with intellectual disabilities.

A booklet titled "I Walk with Raymond," written by Catholic priest Roderick Milne (of the Marist congregation) of New Zealand several years ago, tells the story about Raymond and the people of l'Arche Punla (or Ang Arko ng Pilipinas) which is the Philippine branch of l'Arche. Fr. Milne ministered to Raymond during his stay in the Philippines.

Ang Arko-Punla is in Bayanihan Village in Cainta, Rizal. L'Arche, an international community, was founded by Jean Vanier. Well-known author Henri Nouwen's "The Road to Daybreak" tells about Vanier's work.

Raymond was about eight years old in 1988 when he was abandoned by his family. Ang Arko-Punla, then in Nagtahan, took him in. Raymond has since been with Ang Arko. Raymond does not speak but communicates by making noises and bodily movements. He needs to be assisted but otherwise he is physically healthy and is a brisk walker.

There are many special persons like Raymond who live in l'Arche communities. And there are many good individuals like Marchan Padla and Fr. Milne who have found their way to these communities to serve. Maybe you will, too. The music might lead you there.

It's amazing how a little song and a person who cannot speak and who hates noise have connected a number of people who did not know one another in the beginning. Paolo Kalaw Tirol of Hangad was so inspired he worked with Marchan to give the song its musical form and arrangement. Julius Guevarra did the instrumental arrangement.

The other songs in "A Wish for Christmas" are "Child Emmanuel," "Paskong Pinoy Medley" (from five Filipino Christmas staples) and "Silent Night." I was told it is selling well at P120. The album and other JCF products—music, books, video, etc.—are available at Tanging Yaman Outlets at the Loyola House of Studies in Ateneo de Manila University. From there, you might want to visit Ang Arko in nearby Cainta.

Another music group that needs support for its brave and off-the-beaten track repertoire is the Andres Bonifacio Concert Choir that brought music to our INQUIRER Christmas celebration last week. They came in simple Filipino costumes and regaled us with patriotic, indigenous and popular Filipino songs. Founder, composer and conductor Jerry Dadap also coaches the INQUIRER choir. He wrote the musical "Andres Bonifacio: Ang Dakilang Anak Pawis."

The Andres Bonifacio Concert Choir and the Andres Bonifacio Rondalla are under the Andres Bonifacio Music Foundation (ABMFI) which was founded in 1986. If you want to add nationalistic musical fire to your affairs, call the ABMFI at 9314882.

* * *

We all know now that: If it had been Three Wise Women (instead of men), they would have asked for directions, arrived on time, helped deliver the Baby Jesus, cleaned the stable, cooked dinner and brought practical gifts.

My addition: And they would have stayed on much, much longer to accompany the Holy Family during their flight into Egypt.

Today, the Feast of the Holy Innocents, let us remember and do something for the children and the infants who suffer because of neglect, widespread violence and disasters.

To those who sent Christmas text messages and did not get a reply from me, I wsh u a gr8 +mas & a hp nu yr. In other words, I WISH YOU A GOOD AND MEANINGFUL CHRISTMAS AND A GREAT YEAR AHEAD. Remember how simply it all began.

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

Nakpil's gift to the nation

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

THE STORY I LOVE TO TELL OF THE DOYENNE of Philippine journalism, Carmen Guerrero Nakpil, is a testimonial she gave to the wonders of Melatonin. She said it worked wonders in helping people sleep—particularly if gulped down with a generous snifter of brandy. But no story about Chitang Nakpil could ever possibly match her own stories about herself and those she has known and loved over the years. This holiday season, she gave the nation a present, the first in what promises to be a trilogy of an autobiography. The first volume, which takes the reader from the year of her birth to the end of World War II, is titled "Myself, Elsewhere." It's no recycled collection of old columns; it is all-new, though what it contains is the valedictory of a vanished way of life.

Writes Nakpil of the holiday season of her youth: "If a case for quaintness had to be made for Ermita, the first item would be the 'Tres Reyes Magos,' the feast of the Three Kings, the sixth of January, the day children got their presents. Our Christmas season was out of sync with the rest of the Anglo-American world that had recently adopted us. We had never heard of Santa Claus, there were no Christmas trees in our houses and the Christmas presents on the day Christ was born came from our godparents (only one or two each and not droves of politicians) as a carryover from baptism. We observed the novena of early morning Masses, midnight Mass and *media noche*, but the big day (gifts-wise) was January the 6th ….

"We did not care about the new-fangled Christmas trees, because we had the *belen*, not just a crèche of the Holy Family, but a whole landscaped model of the town of Bethlehem, with the focus on the stables below the Star …. I had my own Infant Jesus in a manger filled with straw, by my bed, and spent much time rearranging the swaddling clothes. There were silk banners with long tassels, blue and white and red, hanging from every window that faced the street, so that the whole town looked like a medieval court before a joust. And there were two town fiestas, the *Bota Flores* and the *Fiesta del Pueblo*, with Christmas in between.

"The earlier town fiesta, on the seventeenth of December commemorated the yearly campaign, which had been waged for 200 years, consisting of a procession to Intramuros to protest the taking of the image of the Nuesta Señora by Legazpi's soldiers in May 1571. It was a massive, colorful demonstration, addressed to the Archbishop and the clergy in Intramuros, who had retained the image since and installed it in the Cathedral. Every year, Ermitenses, strewing flowers along the way, marched to Intramuros, pleading for the return of the Virgin and called it *Bota Flores* (*bota* being an early form of throw, a pelting of flowers).

"When the image was returned sometime in the 19th century, Ermita continued the tradition of the annual procession within the town, without the march to the Walled City, with the young men in sailor costumes and the girls in Filipino dress …. Instead of Santa Claus or 'Jingle Bells,' we had authenticity."

And it is authenticity that makes her book so powerful; her authentic affection for what must be so alien a way of life as to seem impossible to present-day readers. But this isn't a book of tales of happy parties, doting parents, dashing, debonaire friends and the gossip, whether amusing or scurrilous, of those prewar years; in other words, this isn't the book version of an embalmed corpse. This is a look back at the way people really lived, loved, even hated; with details no novelist could have invented and yet we know must have been true.

A Spanish friar who played the Spanish royal anthem in the Church patio every Sunday, despite the Revolution having been fought 30 years earlier; families that marked the Feast of Saint Joseph by bringing out their best silver, and cooking their most luxurious dishes so they could wait hand and foot on beggars brought in from the streets; courtship preceded by what today we would call stalking; and an annual carnival in which the normally conservative would don masks and cloaks, and flirt.

It was a world, a country turned colony aspiring to be a nation, a metropolis, a town, a neighborhood, a family arbitrating between the patriotism of the revolution, the modernity of America, and the sense of tradition and urbanity that was the best hallmark of Spanish influence. In her book, Nakpil tells it not only as it was, but tells it as someone who has lived through those times ought to do: with a sense of the important things that have been lost—the things that may not matter on the whole but the loss of which still seems unfortunate; and the things that shouldn't be missed and are mercifully long gone.

One passage, in particular, demonstrates this best: how the Spaniards kept their distance from the Filipinos, and how the Filipinos returned their social reserve; how the Americans, too, kept to themselves and didn't mix socially with their colonial wards; and how Catholics and Protestants eyed each other with mutual suspicion though there were the occasional mixed—yet successful—marriages.

Nakpil looked back on them all and wrote: "Strangely enough, after the war and the destruction of Ermita, bigotry faded and we all became warm and loyal friends. It had only been the diehard Ermita protocol that had kept us revising the Spanish Conquista and the Protestant Reformation and the Filipino-American War, imposing anachronistic strictures on ourselves. I recall, with embarrassment, the frissons of antipathy to Spanish and Protestants that we harbored. Their disappearance was one of the welcome consequences of the war. After facing terror and destruction together, we came to our senses and became confirmed liberals. There were no bigots in the ensuing rubble."

Charade

YOUNG BLOOD

Rhea M. Alba

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I AM ON A 24-HOUR TRAIN RIDE FROM BEIJING TO Guangzhou, China, as I write. My whole body is still stiff from running around the station while lugging over 28 kilos of baggage. And to think that just a few minutes ago, my colleague and I almost missed this train.

We had been delivered to what we thought was the right train station, until we found out, 30 minutes before our scheduled departure, that the Beijing Railway Station we were supposed to go to was on the other side of the city. After making a thousand desperate gestures and spending 135 yuan, my colleague and I finally arrived and boarded this train.

Unfortunately, since we were the last two persons to get in and we had no idea how to negotiate using Mandarin, we have no choice but to take the topmost bunks in a three-layered, prison cell-like structure that is now our cabin. It's not exactly the most comfortable place to be in, especially when you are sharing it with four other people speaking a language you cannot understand. And so we are left with the challenge of doing a careful balancing act every time we need to go down our beds to eat, stretch or pee. We cannot sit up straight, lest we bump our heads against the ceiling. And I'm a little too close to the ultra bright fluorescent light, guaranteeing a sleepless trip the rest of the way.

All this happened or is happening because I don't know how to communicate in Chinese. But it's only now that I have come to realize that in the past few days, I have survived by engaging in a seemingly endless game of charade with almost everyone I have to deal with.

I used to think charade is just a game for kids or noontime show stars who play it as if it's the most intellectually stimulating and entertaining game in the world. But because of my stay here and the dire circumstances I've gone through, I have become the newest recruit to the charade club. To find a shopping center, for instance, I have to take money from my wallet, point to my T-shirt, put them together and pray the other party understands enough to know that I want to go to a clothing store.

I have been lucky enough to have learned a few Chinese words that allow me to order food in a restaurant. For instance, I know that *daocha* stands for fork and knife, which is important if you are tired of using chopsticks. *Bingshui* means iced water, which is essential to know because their drinking water is normally served warm. But when we come to the main course, we have to check out the food to see if it is suitable for my Muslim friend. Whenever we are in doubt or we don't know what to order, we settle for chicken, but we have to do it by flapping our arms.

To ask whether a place of interest is within walking distance, I let my index finger and middle finger do the walking on my palm. But after walking non-stop in such a big, foreign city, I usually end up making imaginary driving motions to signify that I want to get a cab. The next step? I simply give the taxi driver the hotel's card.

It's a good thing that nodding one's head or making the thumbs up sign are also signs of assent or approval here. In fact, they are the gestures I eagerly seek after a long, tiring day.

Of course, I also had some misses while playing charade with the Chinese, because as my English teacher in high school used to tell us, "Actions speak louder than words—but they are not as clear." One time, my colleague and I almost got lost after taking a taxi. Because it was so dark, all buildings and Chinese lanterns looked the same to us. It turned out that we had been dropped on the right street but at the wrong hotel. Luckily, we only had to walk a few meters in Beijing's freezing weather.

When I joined a group tour to the Great Wall, I could not understand a thing because the tour guide spoke in Chinese all the time. A Chinese guy knew a bit of broken English, but he couldn't keep pace with what the guide was saying.

It was worse when we visited one of the Ming Tombs. I didn't know why all the Chinese tourists had a frightened look on their faces, and why the Chinese student I was walking with shrieked whenever I would step on a line or stone slab. I supposed it had something to do with *feng-shui*, burial rites and what-not, but no amount of hand movements or facial expressions could get me the information I wanted. Which was just too bad, because the English captions offered little by way of explanation as well.

Some people would say we should have purchased an English-Mandarin phrase book, but we did and it wasn't of much help. Then we should have hired an English-speaking tour guide, right? But looking back, I feel that aside from meeting new friends and seeing the historical sites of China, the curious charades we were forced to play made the experience more memorable for me (we couldn't afford the second option anyway). It forced me to become more creative in thinking of ways to express my thoughts and feelings. I've also realized that my ability to speak in English doesn't guarantee survival in other places. Sometimes, it's more important to hone communication skills that are beyond words to get a message across.

I'm glad that this train ride is about to end in a few hours because I'm so excited about the next thing that I have to do: move my right hand in an upward, diagonal motion and flash a big smile.

See you in the Philippines!

Rhea Alba, 22, is an MA Community Development student at the University of the Philippines, Diliman. She was in China for the 2006 Asean Youth Camp.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Savior

"In this post-modern age, perhaps, he (man) needs a savior all the more, since the society in which he lives has become more complex, and the threats to his personal and moral integrity have become more insidious."

—Pope Benedict XVI in his "Urbi et Orbi" (To the City and the World) message

The INQUIRER is a member of the
PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE
The National Association of Philippine Newspapers

'Blind venetian'

RINA JIMENEZ-DAVID'S DEC. 10 column, titled "Joe and gang scale a mountain," was a masterpiece. It should be made compulsory reading for all Filipinos starting with Grade 1 pupils.

If Joe De Venecia still insists on the non-existent "clamor of the people" for parliamentary government (what I hear in the streets are groan about the high prices of commodities, high cost of electricity, etc.), he is not only deaf; the venetian is blind.

—**JESUS. V. LANUZA,**
joyce.lanuza@gmail.com

A classic display of subservience to the US

WE THOUGHT THAT OUR PHILIPPINE Constitution classes were clear enough for the common *tao*. Article II, Sec. 7 states that "The State shall pursue an independent foreign policy. In its relations with other states, the paramount consideration shall be national sovereignty, territorial integrity, national interest, and the right to self-determination."

However, it looks like our government, represented by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, does not understand this very simple principle. They think that the Visiting Forces Agreement is over and above the Philippine Constitution.

Gonzalez had no right to scold Judge Benjamin Pozon over the media when the latter refused to turn over rape convict L/Cpl. Daniel Smith to US custody. We're sure that Gonzalez does not even understand the logic and principles on which Judge Pozon based his decision.

It is really a shame to have a government that cares more about its relationship with a foreign country than its relationship with its own people. Because of the Subic rape case custody issue, the Filipino people will all the more realize how they are being deprived of justice and law.

Again, we have no one else to blame but Secretary Gonzalez and the person he represents. His "lawyering" for an American rape convict is a classic act of subservience to foreign rule.

But if there is subservience from the puppet government, we thank that there is also strong resistance from the people. We thank Judge Pozon. We thank Nicole. We thank the multitude of Filipinos who continue to defy the US demand, in the name of sovereignty, independence and national dignity.

—**MARCO M. DELOS REYES,**
national president, National Union of
Students of the Philippines
nusp_national@yahoo.com

Better for these politicos to move to America

PROTECT THE AMERICAN SOLDIERS from what? It should be the other way around. Cancel the useless Visiting Forces Agreement altogether. We do not need those GI rapists.

American lackeys in RP politics should wake up. The less we have anything to do with the US military, the better for us. If our US-loving politicos love Americans that much, why don't they simplify everything and just go there? That sounds like a good idea, doesn't it?

Let's begin with Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez. He should look good in an American GI uniform. Then hopefully he gets fed to the Taliban.

—**VERNON DULA,**
vernondula@yahoo.com

Nothing more to hope for from congressmen

WHY ARE OUR CONGRESSMEN STILL trying to force Charter change back into the picture when it is clear that the majority of Filipinos are against it? A unicameral legislature will not solve our country's problems, not with the kind of lawmakers we have been electing these past few decades.

For as long as lawmakers are responsible only to their constituents who can be kept happy with basketball courts and waiting sheds (prominently carrying the representatives' names), they'd feel that they can go away with toeing the party line however unpopular it may be in the larger picture. On the other hand, senators are elected by the entire country, hence, they are responsible to a larger constituency.

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's desire for a unicameral body is rooted in the fact that she can't control the Senate.

The existence of an opposition is what makes democracy works. We might not agree with what the opposition stands for but at least its presence makes sure every bill gets scrutinized before it is legislated into law.

—**IAN CEASAR VICENTE,**
ian_ceasar27@yahoo.com
1008 State St., Atlanta GA 30318

Not pro-Left, just doing his job right

JUDGE POZON SYMPATHETIC TO THE Left, according to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez. Pozon is not sympathetic to the Left. He is only doing his job right. The Left that the justice secretary is referring to are Filipinos. Gonzalez again shows that he's confused about his nationality by sympathizing with the American who committed the mistake.

—**LOY ARGUELLES,**
l4arguelles@yahoo.com
P.O.Box 18592 Doha qatar

ANTI-RIOT policemen block militants demanding VFA's abolition.

Philippines should let go of Visiting Forces Agreement

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY OFFICIALS of the Philippine government should worry if the United States cancels the Visiting Forces Agreement. The VFA works only to the advantage of the US government. How could Filipinos still think that the American government cares about Filipinos?

The Filipino people should wake up and get out of that colonial mentality that looks to the United States as the only hope of a better life. Look at New Orleans after the Katrina hurricane. Look at Iraq. Nobody is praising the United States except the Filipinos and Mexicans.

—**BOBET DELMUNDO,**
bdelmundojr@yahoo.ca, 110 Clegg Road,
Markham, Ontario, Canada

VFA also beneficial to the Philippines

LAWYER EVALYN URSUA DISMISSED the cancellation by the US government of the RP-US Balikatan exercises as useless. She said: "We did not have VFA between 1991 and 1999 after the US bases were closed and before the VFA and yet we survived."

Coming from a supposedly smart lawyer, that was a dumb statement to make. She appeared clueless that the Visiting Forces Agreement came about as a response to the terrorist activities of the Abu Sayyaf, which culminated in the hostage-taking of foreign tourists in year 2000 and threats of violence from the Al Qaida and Jemaah Islamiya. Had it not been for the technical help of the visiting forces, the slippery Abu Sabaya would still be alive today directing his murderous group.

Ursua is well advised to stick to the job she knows best—that is, lawyering—and stay away from diplomatic issues that she knows nothing about. She has done enough damage already.

—**CESAR M. DE LOS REYES,**
cesdlrey@globelines.com.ph

Degenerate and 'clumsy' legal minds

ONLY DEGENERATE LEGAL MINDS could have so clumsily handled the controversial commitment order of Judge Benjamin Pozon for Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, convict in the now celebrated "Nicole" rape case. President Macapagal-Arroyo's most valued Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez heaped invectives and leveled threats against Pozon, accusing him of arrogance and ignorance of the law for insisting on the temporary incarceration of Smith in the Makati City jail.

As arguments from both sides have been aired, it seems Pozon has the legal upper hand. And Gonzalez, joined by the solicitor general, may yet kiss the dirt if the controversy goes to the Supreme Court; or worse, eat dung if it goes to the International Court of Justice. Smith's private lawyers, who joined the fray when Gonzalez first unleashed his ill temper on Pozon, have now sobered up and are more guarded in their comments.

Perhaps, Pozon should take the suggestion of Sen. Aquilino Pimentel and cite this bullying Cabinet member for contempt. Let us see if he will scurry under the presidential skirt like his colleagues who first refused to face Senate investigations, and like them will be flushed out of their unhealthful sanctuary by the Supreme Court.

The experience might drain some of the venom and arrogance Gonzalez is wont to spew upon those who don't agree with his skewed views.

—**EP DAKANAY JR.,**
43 Baltazar St., Philamlife Village,
Pamplona, Las Piñas City

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@ inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Toxic waste dumping not new to RP

"TRADE SECRETARY PETER FAVILA (OBNOxiously) assured the public that the waste-trade provision in the agreement, under which Japan is allowed to export toxic and hazardous waste to the Philippines, is nothing more than an innocuous, meaningless surplusage because in the first place, neither Japan nor the Philippines intends to trade in waste." (PDI, 11/20/06)

I commend Ronnel Lim for hitting Trade Secretary Peter Favila and Undersecretary Thomas Aquino "right on their heads" with respect to the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA). But the public should be told that this "toxic waste dumping business" that JPEPA seeks to promote has been in existence and is still very much flourishing here in the Cavite Export Processing Zone (CEPZ).

I remember way back in 1998 when I was president of our Rotary Club of Tanza, a fellow Rotarian who worked for the CEPZ office mentioning in a discussion that locators from Japan were bringing in container vans full of obsolete computer hardware that were considered toxic junk in their country.

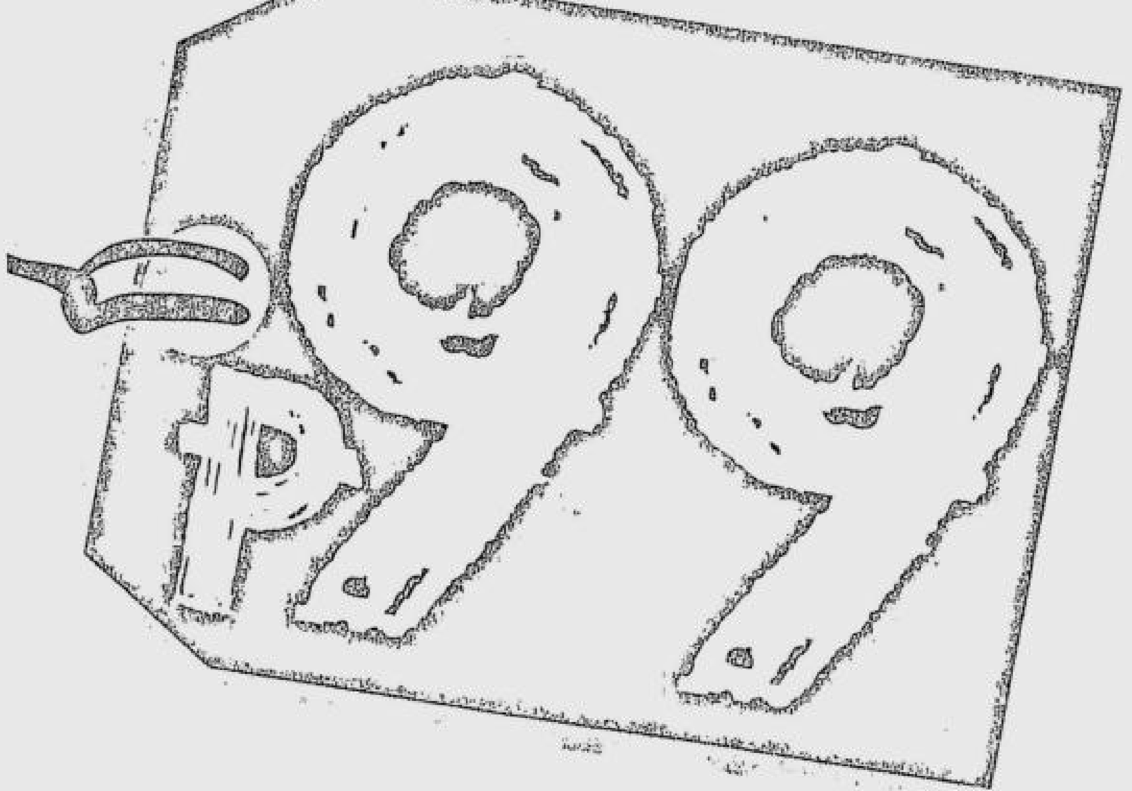
Due to the exorbitant cost of recycling the hazardous wastes and the heavy penalty for dumping them in Japan, it is less costly to ship the toxic wastes to the Philippines, more so because they are classified zero-tariff, non-value items here. Our local "scrappers" (modern-day *basurero*, please excuse the use of the term) go *loko* "collecting" from the "*basura*"—burning them in backyards for the gold particles that coated the tips of the motherboard connector. The practice definitely pollutes and destroys our environment and is a health hazard. I know of two scrappers who had become wealthy but died of cancer.

My wife, who got cured of her asthma a long time ago, has lately been suffering again from the ailment. There are nights when she would wake up because she could smell "something is burning in the house," only to find out that the smell of a burning transformer is actually coming from outside our house, a place that a scrapper uses for burning what look like discarded plastic or clothing materials. Needless to say, my wife's asthma attacks are getting worse.

Are our national and local officials condoning the "importation" of toxic wastes for more yen though at the expense of our people's health and environment?

—**MICHAEL SISON, 4757-D Barasoain St.**
Barangay Olympia, Makati City

Seat Sale!



All Domestic Destinations

Bacolod, Butuan, Cagayan de Oro, Cebu, Clark, Cotabato, Davao, Dipolog, Dumaguete, General Santos, Iloilo, Kalibo, Laoag, Legaspi, Manila, Puerto Princesa, Roxas, Tacloban, Tagbilaran and Zamboanga

Sale period: December 28, 2006 to January 3, 2007 • **Travel period:** February 1 to March 31, 2007
More than 100,000 seats available • Promo is non-refundable

CEBU PACIFIC AIR.COM
Call (02)70-20-888 or visit the Travel Agent nearest you. Terms & conditions apply. One-way fares/vice-versa • Fares may not be available on all days & flights • Fares are exclusive of applicable fees, taxes & surcharges and are non-refundable.

CEBU PACIFIC
It's time everyone flies.

EZ2 **FOUR DIGIT**
18 24 | 7 1 0 4
Mid-Day **SUERTRES** Evening
2 0 2 | 4 0 7
(All in exact order)

Across the NATION

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph
Text us your feedback: inquirer atn name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) *Assistant Editor* **Tony Bergonia**

MEGALOTTO 6/45
1 5 14 23 34 42
P15,833,244.60

Charges await owner of Ormoc store

By Alcuin Papa, *in Manila*
and Ven Labro and Jhunnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

THE BLAME FOR THE ORMOC CITY DEPARTment store fire that killed 24 people rests squarely on the store owner, a police official said yesterday.

Senior Supt. Florencio Caccam, head of the Firearms and Explosives Division of the Philippine National Police, said no dealer was authorized to sell firecrackers in Ormoc.

"All dealers there are operating illegally," he said.

"Why allow firecrackers (to be sold) when they know they are not licensed to sell?" Caccam said.

"The owner would be charged. The presence of firecrackers inside the mall... is an indication of negligence on his (mall owner's) part," said another police official, PNP spokesperson Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao.

The police officials also said the parents of the child who was believed to have started the fire by accident could also be held liable.

But Caccam said responsibility for the fire "will focus on the store owner and the owner of the stall selling the fireworks."

Ormoc City Mayor Eric Codilla said charges are also likely to be filed against the owner of Unitop Marketing, the store where the 24 people died in a fiery trap.

Codilla said two representatives of Unitop from Tagbilaran, including a certain Mr. Chu, arrived on Tuesday afternoon.

The two Unitop officials promised that they would extend financial assistance to all the victims, including those in the hospitals, he said.

According to Codilla, he told the two Unitop officials that they might be facing charges, depending on the outcome of the investigation.

The mayor also released the names of the fatalities—Analiza Orayle, 30, and her 7-month-daughter Mika; Dante Pagay, 30; Sheila Teves, 30; Panyong Langres; 60; Primo Mellomida, 17; Cecilia Dalaguit, 43; Severiana Cartagena, 40; Oscar Merino; Helen Constantino; Eleanor Capuyan; Katherine Mistula; Ann Mae Sanchez; Luisa Inday and her 3-month-old baby; Luzviminda Baguio; Jennifer Gumahin; Brandy Bantasan; Felipe Obeña; Josephine Arabia; and Elvisa Gerolaga.

Three others are still unidentified.

Three of them are from Camotes Island. Codilla said Camotes residents usually go to Ormoc to shop because it was nearer than Cebu.

The Unitop management gave each victim P50,000, while the mayor gave P5,000 each.

Patalcorin said the relatives of the fatalities paid P10,000 to the funeral home out of the money they received from the Unitop management.

The Cebu provincial government also promised to give another P5,000 each to the families of the three victims from Cebu.

The Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Bureau in Cebu City seized at least 20 sacks of imported firecrackers from different stores in downtown Cebu City.

REMINDER

ARNOLD ALMACEN, INQUIRER VISAYAS

Bamboo poles still smeared with bunker fuel provide a reminder to residents of Nueva Valencia, Guimaras of the Petron oil spill that sent millions of liters of oil invading their shores and changing their lives forever.

ROUNDUP

I. Bandayrel; 90

ISABELO Z. Bandayrel, of Bangued, Abra, died on Dec. 23 at the Philippine Heart Center in Quezon City at the age of 90. He is survived by his children, Mila, Alex and Cris, Josie and Ruben, Beng and Cora, Rey and Marie, Fred and Cora, Jim and Jenny; grandchildren and great grandchildren; brothers and sisters, and other relatives. His body lies at the St. Joseph Chapel at the Holy Family Parish Church in Roxas District, Quezon City. Burial will be on Jan. 3, 2007, at the Himlayang Pilipino Memorial Park in Tandang Sora, Quezon City, at noon.

Bus marshals pressed

COTABATO CITY—Officials of the provinces of North Cotabato and Shariff Kabunsuan said there was a need to post marshals on buses plying the Davao-Cotabato route to protect passengers. North Cotabato Gov. Manny Piñol and Shariff Kabunsuan Gov. Bimbo Sinsuat separately issued the statement in the wake of the rising number of robberies in buses. The two officials said they would meet with their police commanders to discuss the plan. Col. Pedro Soria, commander of the Army's 602nd Infantry Brigade, has agreed it was about time to post marshals in buses.

Charlie C. Señase, Inquirer Mindanao

Headless body found

JOLO, Sulu—The body of a headless pregnant woman was found in Barangay Alu Layag-Layad in Parang town here. Supt. Hakkam Pae, deputy provincial police chief, said they had to rush the body to the nearest hospital, hoping that they could still save the baby inside her womb. But Dr. Tina Tan of the Sulu Provincial Hospital said the baby was already dead. Police said the body was found dumped in a bush. Residents claimed the victim was not from their village. Police are still looking for the missing head.

Ed General, Inquirer Mindanao

Rebs kill Army sergeant

CAMP MELCHOR DELA CRUZ, Isabela—Two men, believed to be communist rebels, shot and killed an Army soldier in Ramon town on Christmas Day. Isabela police operations chief Supt. Antonio Marallag Jr. said TSgt. Ricardito Mejia, a member of the military intelligence battalion of the Army's 5th Infantry Division, was in front of his house in Barangay Raniag when the two men aboard a motorcycle shot him at 5 p.m. Marallag said Mejia died instantly from head and body wounds.

Villamor Visaya Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon

3 in motorcycle die

LUCENA CITY—At least three persons, who all had a drink too many in a Christmas Eve party, died in a road accident here when the motorcycle they were riding skidded in a deadly road curve in the outskirts of the city past midnight Monday. Police identified the dead as Warlito Dagpin Mission, 22; Rizaldy Grajo, 31; both residents of this city and one still unidentified male companion. Police said the three were on a Kymco motorcycle headed to the city when it slipped in the wet pavement in an accident prone sharp curve along M. L. Tagarao Extension in the village of Ibabang Iyam. The three were thrown off the motorcycle and died instantly. Police said the three appeared to be under the influence of alcohol.

Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

Handuraw feast in Dapitan

ILIGAN CITY—Dapitan City starts the three-day first Handuraw Festival today, an event organized in honor of national hero Dr. Jose Rizal. Handuraw is Visayan for flashback. Dapitan City Councilor Apple Agolong said the festival was aimed at giving recognition to Rizal's courage to stand up against tyranny and oppression and for his exceptional love of country. Before Rizal was executed, he had spent time in Dapitan. Among those being put up for display during the Handuraw Festival, which will run until Dec. 30, are some Rizal mementos. There will also be film showings on Rizal's life, a Rizal Look Alike contest and various activities. Agolong said the Czech Ambassador to the Philippines will join Mayor Dominador Jalosjos Jr. and other city officials during the wreath-laying ceremony at the Rizal shrine on Dec. 30.

Richel Umel, Inquirer Mindanao

Group sees poll plot in registration of soldiers

LUCENA CITY—A MILITANT group vowed to question in the Commission on Elections the recent mass registration of government soldiers as voters in the coming May 2007 elections.

In a statement, Fernando Hicap, national chair of the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya), said it would file a petition at the Comelec early next year to question the legality and constitutionality of a military order for all soldiers to register even if they were nonresidents in their areas of assignment.

"They can go home and vote if they want to exercise their rights to suffrage. The absentee voting law does not apply to all military officials and personnel on duty. That law belongs to Filipino overseas workers and migrants," Hicap said.

He said his group would ask Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos to immediately issue a cease-and-desist order to all Comelec regional and local offices to stop entertaining the massive enlistment of soldiers as voters, even if they are not certified residents of the areas where they are currently assigned.

On Thursday, at least 2,000 soldiers from the Central Command, the Naval Forces Central and the Philippine Air Force registered as voters at the Comelec office in Cebu so they could vote in the 2007 elections.

Col. Jefferson Omandam, Centcom spokesperson, said the directive for mass registration was compelled by the results of a survey conducted by the Armed Forces of the Philippines that showed that very few soldiers exercise their right to vote, citing failure to register as the main reason. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Bodies of rebs found; Army says comrades shot them dead

COTABATO CITY—THE DECOMposing remains of two ranking communist guerrillas, who were allegedly shot by their comrades, were recovered by soldiers in the hinterlands of Columbio, Sultan Kudarat, a military spokesperson said yesterday.

Lt. Col. Julieto Ando, of the 6th Infantry Division based in Maguindanao, said the remains of Catalino Tacadao, regional secretary of the NPA's Far South region, and unit commander Arnulfo Pasanurin, were unearthed by operatives of the 27th Infantry Battalion in a shallow grave in Barangay Datal Biao in Columbio.

Ando said the two communist leaders were wounded in a Dec. 16 clash in Columbio and were apparently shot to death by their comrades because of serious injuries.

"They were killed and buried by their comrades after the encounter," he said.

Ando did not say how and when the shallow grave was discovered, but added the soldiers also recovered an M-16 rifle, a Garand rifle and several documents, which were buried with the bodies.

Communist rebels remain active in the hinterlands of Sultan Kudarat and the neighboring provinces of Davao del Sur, North Cotabato and South Cotabato. *Jeoffrey Maitem with a report from Eldie S. Aguirre, Inquirer Mindanao*

Army says new roads will beat NPA

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—THE MILITARY IS coming up with a new phase in its campaign against the New People's Army—implement development projects in areas once infiltrated by communist rebels.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said this was part of the planned intensified campaign against the communist rebels.

In an interview during his visit here Tuesday, Esperon said the military would further intensify its operations next year until they crush the country's enemies, specifically the NPA.

Esperon estimated that the development projects would cost about P300 million, which would come from the military's P1-billion budget.

He said the projects, which would be implemented in barangays that used to be NPA havens, include farm-to-market roads and livelihood projects.

The military would encourage the creation of cooperatives in the beneficiary barangays to provide residents livelihood opportunities.

With these development projects, people in these communities would no longer have reasons to be influenced or become NPA members or sympathizers, Esperon said.

Each beneficiary barangay would receive about P5 million, he said.

Esperon, however, could not say how many barangays have been freed from NPA influence.

But Maj. Gen. Rodrigo Maclang, commanding general of the 8th Infantry Division, said the military has cleared 122 of the 300 villages in Eastern Visayas that were either influenced or controlled by the NPAs.

"These barangays are mostly located in the three Samar provinces," Maclang added.

Esperon also noted that the military has earned a "strategic victory" in their campaign against the members of the NPA, the armed wing of the Communist Party of he Philippines.

"But we gained more than enough momentum," he added.

Esperon claimed that the number of NPA regular members dropped from 12,000 in 2002 to just 7,100. Of this number, about 1,000 are based in Eastern Visayas, one of the remaining stronghold regions of the NPA, he said.

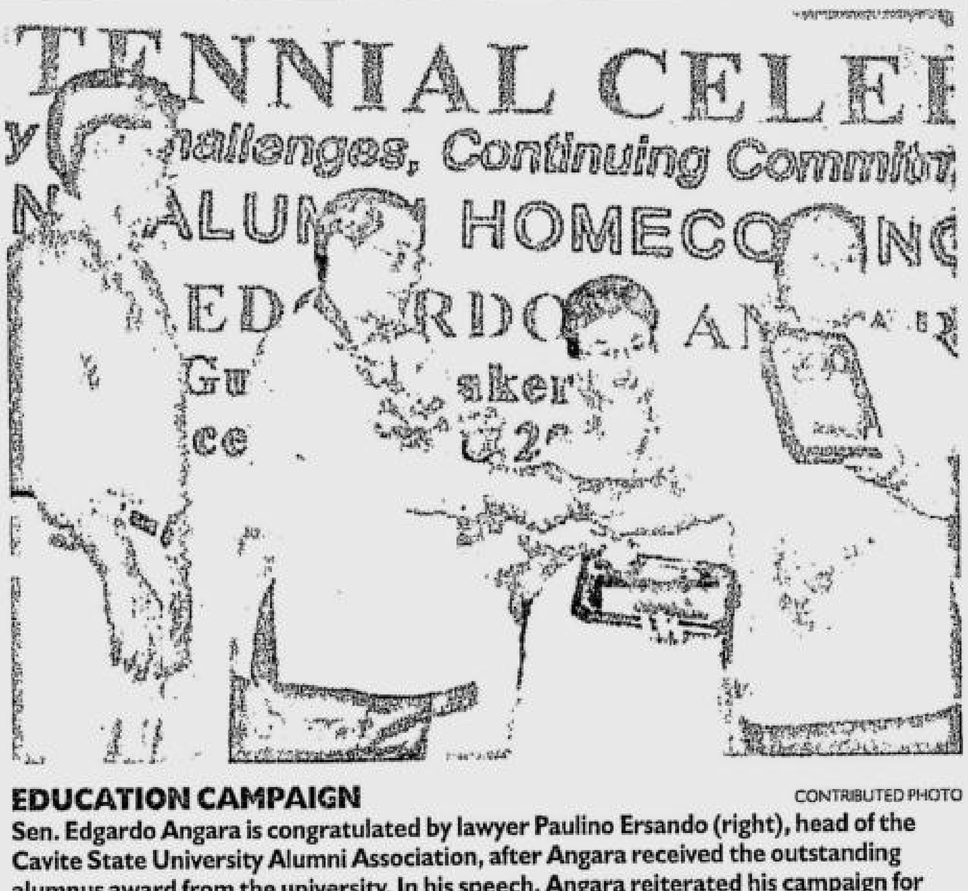
If the military conducts a relentless campaign against the NPA starting January next year, Esperon said, the number of NPA regular members would be reduced further and the target of an insurgency-free Philippines by 2010 set by President Macapagal-Arroyo would be achieved.

The fresh campaign against the NPA by the military is part of their campaign dubbed "Bantay Laya," Esperon added.

He, however, assured that the rights of the people in the villages would be respected.

"We respect our people's rights," Esperon said.

"The people are already tired of violence. And except for North Korea, there is no longer a communist country in the world. And China has long abandoned its being a communist and now works as a free economy," he said.



EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sen. Edgardo Angara is congratulated by lawyer Paulino Ersando (right), head of the Cavite State University Alumni Association, after Angara received the outstanding alumnus award from the university. In his speech, Angara reiterated his campaign for the improvement of the level of education in Math, Science and Technology.

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

Abaca silk weavers fight for survival

By Delma L. Peyra
Legazpi City

WHEN THE INQUIRER TEAM, ACCOMPANIED BY CYNTHIA Oreste, chief executive officer of the Bicol Small Business Institute Foundation, (BSBIF) reached the community hall of Barangay Banquerohan—with its damaged roof still half-blown as a result of Typhoons "Milenyo" and "Reming's" pounding—there was no mistaking the warm welcome and appreciation for the visitors from a gaggle of 20 smiling, sunburnt-faces, common mothers and housewives and abaca silk ("pinukpok") weavers.

About 30 minutes from downtown Old Albay district, Banquerohan sits atop an upland site where some of the poorest of Legazpi City's rural population reside. (Only 53 percent of the city's population is considered urban.)

There were refreshments for the visitors on the table where three representatives from the Department of Labor and Employment, who arrived earlier, also sat nearby.

It was DOLE, through its "Poverty-Free Zone Program" (PVZ), that provided an initial P1 million seed money in 2002 to the Barangay Banquerohan Resettlement Site Neighborhood Association to start its members' livelihood using their skills handed from generations of Bicol weavers.

That year, the DOLE, with implementing partners—the Bicol Small Business Institute Foundation, the Albay Chamber of Commerce and Industry—along with 37 government and nongovernment agencies, signed a memorandum of agreement choosing the Banquerohan resettlement site as its pilot program for the PVZ program.

Due to the eruption of Mayon volcano in 1992, more than a hundred families from barangays Padang, Mabinit and Buyoan that lie within the 6-km permanent danger zone (north of the city) were permanently relocated and given a resettlement area in Banquerohan.

Before the eruption, these families were already undergoing training and production for their weaving skills.

The DOLE pushed through with their assistance, albeit with the people involved now in a different location.

Stalled production

At the right corner near the entrance of the hall stands an idle electric 4-roller, 42-inch rotary press (then DOLE regional director Glenda Manalo commissioned a Bicolano mechanical engineer to improve the 2-roller type prototype of the Department of Science and Technology).

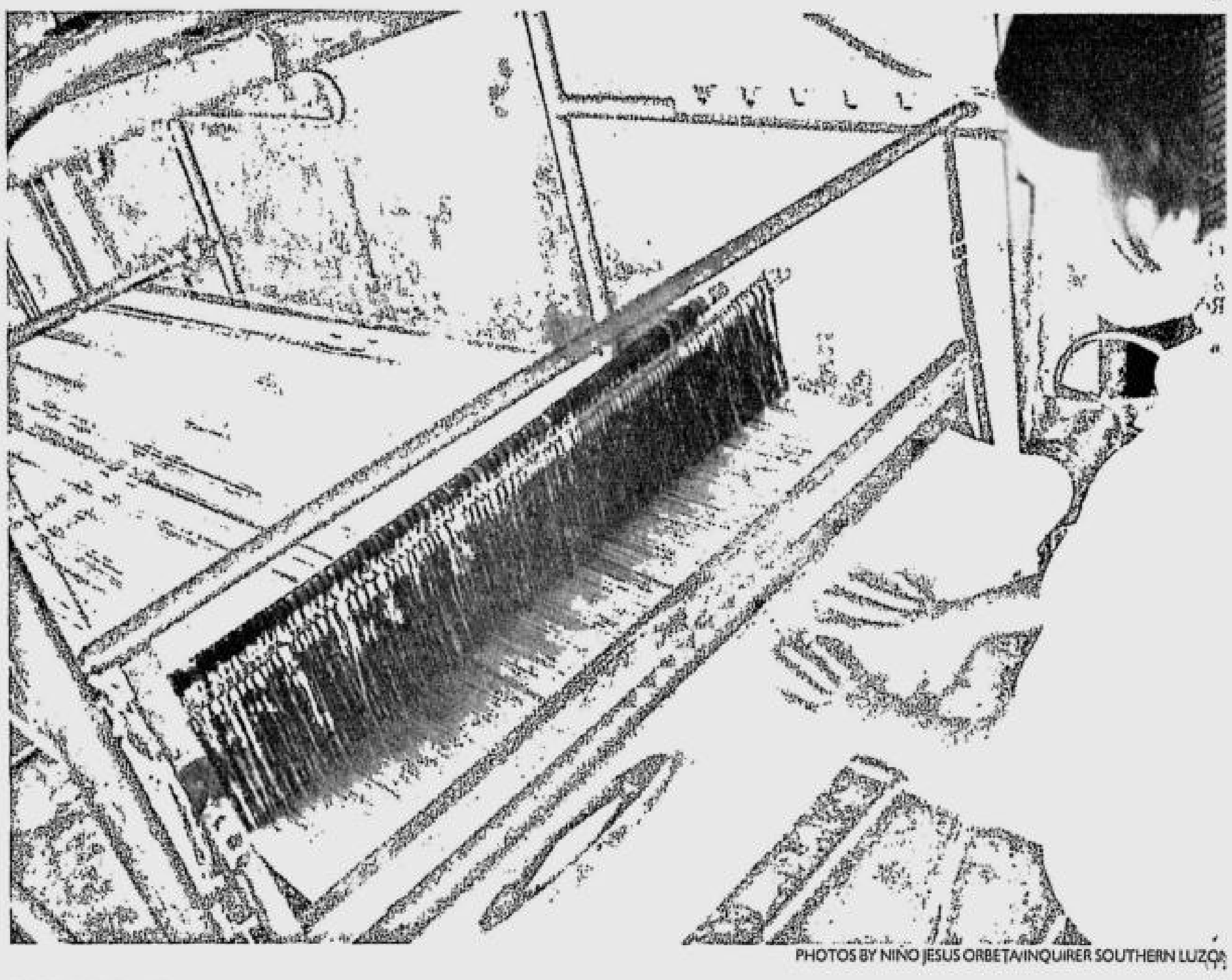
Two months since the typhoons, power has yet to be restored in the village.

The rotary press has done away with the tradition of weavers pounding abaca fibers using large wooden mortar and pestle to make them soft.

The association sells a 36 to 40-inch ply of *pinukpok* at P350-P400 per meter.

About 30 percent of the cost comes from the main material—abaca.

"Sourcing the whitest, high-grade abaca is becoming very difficult for the weavers here even in Albay," according to Oreste.



PHOTOS BY NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

ONE OF the abaca weavers in Barangay Banquerohan, Legazpi City, who makes "pinukpok," or abaca silk.

On the way and about a kilometer from the weavers' resettlement site, Oreste pointed to a cleared patch of land planted with about a hundred or so young abaca plants (banana-like in appearance).

This, she said, was done with the help of the Aquinas University of Legazpi to become ready source of material for the weavers.

However, on a follow-up interview she related sadly that she was informed that due to the bunchy top disease and the devastation caused by the recent typhoon, the young abaca plants will remain "bansot" (dwarf).

The lack of lengthy abaca fibers needed by the weavers hampers them before the weaving production itself.

The "laylay" (long) variety of abaca, found in the Visayas are what they really need, said Oreste.

Instead, the weavers here have to spend time in "pagsugot" (joining the shorter fibers) to come up with the finished fibers called "tinagak."

If done individually by a weaver, it takes her half a day or so before the fibers become ready for a day of weaving.

The BSBIF has thought of seeking the assistance of DOST to come up with mechanical way of "pagsugot."

The science and technology agency had extended the weavers much help for the dyeing and bleaching of the textile, according to Oreste.

The daily weaving capacity of a single weaver is a meter of *pinukpok*.

Currently, the association has 20 "user-friendly steel hand looms."

The weave then is soaked in water with fabric softener then inserted in the roller press.

Currently, a weaver gets P150 for a meter of abaca silk produced.

Erratic marketing

At the back of the hall stands a cabinet filled with unsold stock of abaca silk.

An eye-catching natural hued red-mahogany weave is unfurled by association president Mary Jane Perez, also wife and mother of six children, to show off as sample.

The fabric gave off a sheen, silk-like, yet more natural or earthy in its hue than the common silk fiber (produced by silkworm).

Although a bit coarse when touched, like the *katsa* cloth, the weave is pliant enough to be contoured to the body.

It has also a distinctive drop to it that makes it suitable for formal occasions, according to a local designer who makes gowns out of abaca silk.

Abaca silk, according to research, is three times stronger than cotton and silk (from silkworm).

Perez looks wiry and work-worn, like the other women in the group, who juggle household duties, child-rearing and helping out their husbands, mostly farmers who plant whatever crops they can in their backyard.

"We once joined a trade fair in which the organizer placed us at the back so we sold almost nothing," she related.

"Another time, we were given a seed money of P10,000 to join another fair," she continued. And their sales amounted to just P2,000.

Perez said orders come far and in between—once every two months. There are months when there are no orders.

According to Oreste, full production only came about in 2004, so the foundation considers the abaca silk venture in the town still in its infant stage.

In 2005, they had orders worth P139,000, equal to an annual income just enough for a single family of six in the province.

The association has 43-member families who pay a membership fee of P100 a year.

Yet, Oreste, a CPA who considers herself "a social worker by heart," is quite piqued at the way the abaca silk weavers were not given as much attention as the other home-grown industries in Bicol.

"We need the Department of Trade and Industry and the private sector that were part of the signatories in the MOA to help us in marketing abaca silk."

"Or maybe a volunteer business consultant to help us," she added."

After all, she said, the "skills and capability of these people are there."

To ease worries that orders might not be met with current low production capacity (about 600 meters a month), he said they plan to buy 70 hand looms.

Many members of the association are forced to produce other crafts, or go into dressmaking and produce other abaca weaves such as *sinamay* and abatex to tide them during order-lean months produce other abaca weaves.

Indigenous textile

Perez said their regular customers are fashion designers, such as Jun Lee, who travels to Banquerohan himself to discuss specific requirements and experiments with their cloth.

In September 2005, Lee, together with other Bicol designers such as Willi de Legazpi, Bien-Lyn, and Lloyd Gallaga, with the special participation of Manila-based and well-known Renee Salud, dressed government officials in corporate attire in a ramp fashion show in Naga City.

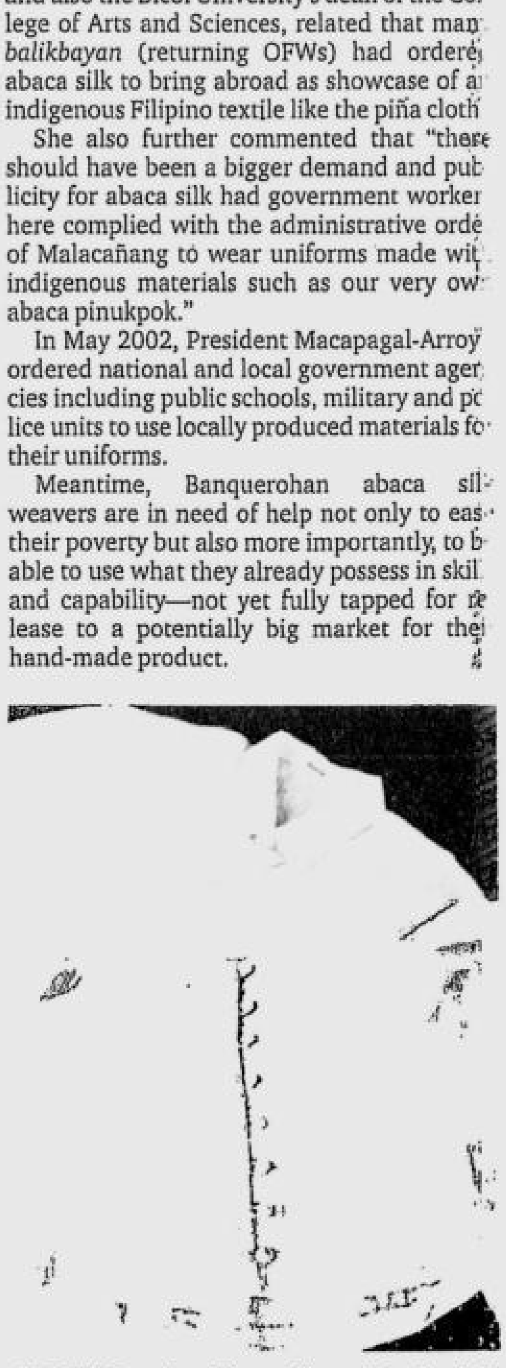
According to De Legazpi, the well-known designer Jeannie Golbourne of Silk Cocoon ha sourced from Banquerohan and that *pinukpok* wowed the fashion house of Chanel in Paris.

Ofelia Vega, the current BSBIF board chair and also the Bicol University's dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, related that many *balikbayan* (returning OFWs) had ordered abaca silk to bring abroad as showcase of an indigenous Filipino textile like the piña cloth.

She also further commented that "there should have been a bigger demand and publicity for abaca silk had government workers here complied with the administrative order of Malacañang to wear uniforms made with indigenous materials such as our very own abaca pinukpok."

In May 2002, President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered national and local government agencies including public schools, military and police units to use locally produced materials for their uniforms.

Meantime, Banquerohan abaca silk weavers are in need of help not only to ease their poverty but also more importantly, to be able to use what they already possess in skills and capability—not yet fully tapped for release to a potentially big market for their hand-made product.



CLOTHES made of abaca silk, or "pinukpok," made in Barangay Banquerohan, Legazpi City.

open for the holidays

To look after all your holiday banking needs, the following branches will open their doors on December 30, 2006:

Alabang
Bacolod - Araneta
Baguio
Balibago
Baliuag
Batangas-Burgos
Caloocan-Mabini
Cebu
Cubao
Dagupan
Davao - Sta. Ana
Diliman
Iba
Iloilo-Iznart
Kamuning
Lapasan Cagayan de Oro
La Union
Malolos
Naga
NAIA (also open on Dec. 31)
Pasig
Rockwell
Sta. Ana
San Pedro
Tutuban
Urdaneta
Zambo - Veterance

Looking after you
Bank of Commerce
www.bankcom.com.ph

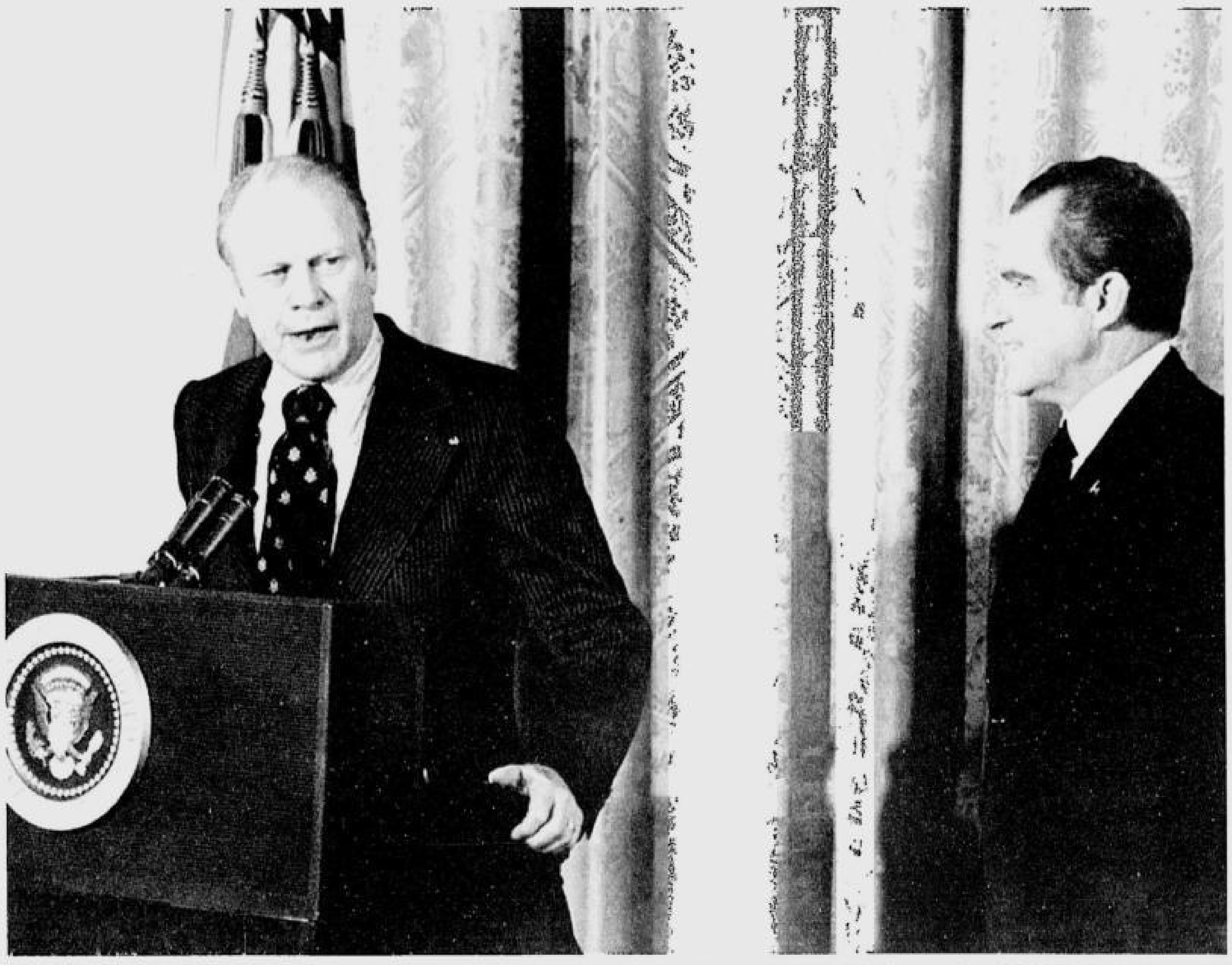
Member PDIC. Deposits insured up to P250,000 per depositor.

Ford, only unelected US president, dies at 93

From page A1

"My family joins me in sharing the difficult news that Gerald Ford, our beloved husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather has passed away at 93 years of age," Mrs. Ford said in a brief statement issued from her husband's office in Rancho Mirage. "His life was filled with love of God, his family and his country."

The statement did not say where Ford died or list a cause of death. Ford had battled pneumonia in January 2006 and underwent two heart treatments—including an angioplasty—in August at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota.



FILE PICTURE shows late US Presidents Gerald Ford (left) speaking as Richard Nixon looks on, in Washington, Oct. 14, 1973. Ford, who sought to heal America after the trauma of the Watergate scandal that forced Richard Nixon from office in 1974, died Tuesday, his wife said. Ford lost the 1976 election campaign to Jimmy Carter, a defeat that historians have attributed to his decision to pardon Nixon for his crimes barely a month after taking office. AFP

Accidental president

He was the longest living president, followed by Ronald Reagan, who also died at 93. Ford had been living at his desert home in Rancho Mirage, California, about 209 km east of Los Angeles.

Ford was an accidental president, Nixon's hand-picked successor, a man of much political experience who had never run on a national ticket. He was as open and straight-forward as Nixon was tightly controlled and conspiratorial.

He took office minutes after Nixon flew off into exile and declared "our long national nightmare is over." But he revived the debate a month later by granting Nixon a pardon for all crimes he committed as president. That single act, it was widely believed, cost Ford election to a term of his own in 1976, but it won praise in later years as a courageous act that allowed the nation to move on.

Replacing Agnew

Ford also earned a place in the history books as the first unelected vice president, chosen by Nixon to replace Spiro Agnew who also was forced from office by scandal.

He was in the White House only 895 days, but changed it more than it changed him.

Watergate ordeal

Even after two women tried separately to kill him, his presidency remained open and plain.

Not imperial. Not reclusive. And, of greatest satisfaction to a nation numbed by Watergate, not dishonest.

Even to millions of Americans who had voted two years earlier for Richard Nixon, the transition to Ford's leadership was one of the most welcomed in the history of the democratic process—despite the fact that it occurred without an election.

After the Watergate ordeal, Americans liked their new president—and first lady Betty, whose candor charmed the country.

They liked her for speaking openly about problems of young people, including her own daughter.

Private couple

And she remained one of the country's most admired women even after the Fords left the White House when she was hospitalized in 1978 and admitted to having become addicted to drugs and alcohol she took for painful arthritis and a pinched nerve in her neck. Four years later she founded the Betty Ford Center in Rancho Mirage, a substance abuse facility next to the Eisenhower Medical Center.

The intensely private couple declined reporter interview requests and were rarely seen outside their home in Rancho Mirage's gated Thunderbird Estates, other than to attend worship services at the nearby St. Margaret's Episcopal Church in Palm Desert.

When Agnew resigned in a bribery scandal in October 1973, Ford was one of four finalists to succeed him: Texan John Connally, New York's Nelson Rockefeller and California's Ronald Reagan.

"Personal factors enter into such a decision," Nixon recalled for a Ford biographer in 1991. I knew all of the final four personally and had great respect for each one of then, but I had known Jerry Ford longer and better than any of the rest.

"We had served in Congress together. I had often campaigned for him in his district," Nixon continued. But Ford had something the others didn't, he would be easily confirmed by Congress, something that could not be said of Rockefeller, Reagan and Connally.

Unassuming

So Ford it was. He became the first vice president appointed under the 25th amendment to the Constitution.

On Aug. 9, 1974, after seeing Nixon off to exile, Ford assumed the office. The next morning, he still made his own breakfast and padded to the front door in his pajamas to get the newspaper.

It was rare that Ford was ever as eloquent as he was for those dramatic moments of his swearing-in at the White House.

"My fellow Americans," he said, "our long national nightmare is over. Our Constitution works. Our great republic is a government of laws and not of men. Here the people rule."

And, true to his reputation as unassuming Jerry, he added: "I am acutely aware that you have not elected me as your president by your ballots. So I ask you to confirm me with your prayers."

For Ford, a full term was not to be. He survived an intraparty challenge from Ronald Reagan only to lose to Democrat Jimmy Carter in November.

Modest tastes, means

In office, Ford's living tastes were modest. When he became vice president, he chose to remain in the same Alexandria, Virginia, home—unpretentious except for a swimming pool—that he shared with his family as a congressman.

After leaving the White House, however, he took up residence in the desert resort area of Rancho Mirage, picked up $1 million for his memoir and another $1 million in a five-year NBC television contract, and served on a number of corporate boards. By 1987, he was on eight such boards, at fees up to $30,000 a year, and was consulting for others, at fees up to $100,000. After criticism, he cut back on such activity.

Profile in Courage award

In his memoir, "A Time to Heal," Ford wrote, "When I was in the Congress myself, I thought it fulfilled its constitutional obligations in a very responsible way, but after I became president, my perspective changed."

Some suggested the pardon was prearranged before Nixon resigned, but Ford, in an unusual appearance before a congressional committee in October 1974, said, "There was no deal, period, under no circumstances." The committee dropped its investigation.

Ford's standing in the polls dropped dramatically when he pardoned Nixon unconditionally. But an ABC News poll taken in 2002 in connection with the 30th anniversary of the Watergate break-in found that six in 10 said the pardon was the right thing to do.

The decision to pardon Nixon won Ford a John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award in 2001, and Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, acknowledging he had criticized Ford at the time, called the pardon "an extraordinary act of courage that historians recognize was truly in the national interest."

Attempts on his life

While Ford had not sought the job, he came to relish it. He had once told Congress that even if he succeeded Nixon he would not run for president in 1976. Within weeks of taking the oath, he changed his mind.

He was undaunted even after the two attempts on his life in September 1975. Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme, a 26-year-old follower of Charles Manson, was arrested after she aimed a semiautomatic pistol at Ford on Sept. 5 in Sacramento, California. A Secret Service agent grabbed her and Ford was unhurt.

Seventeen days later, Sara Jane Moore, a 45-year-old political activist, was arrested in San Francisco after she fired a gun at the president. Again, Ford was unhurt.

Both women are serving life terms in federal prison.

Boyhood

Ford spent most of his boyhood in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

He was born Leslie King on July 14, 1913, in Omaha, Nebraska. His parents were divorced when he was less than a year old, and his mother returned to her parents in Grand Rapids, where she later married Gerald R. Ford Sr. He adopted the boy and renamed him.

Ford was a high school senior when he met his real father. He was working in a Greek restaurant, he recalled, when a man came in and stood watching.

"Finally, he walked over and said, 'I'm your father,'" Ford said. "Well, that was quite a shock." But he wrote in his memoir that he broke down and cried that night and he was left with the image of "a carefree, well-to-do man who didn't really give a damn about the hopes and dreams of his firstborn son." *AP*

The pardon: Ford sealed Watergate shut, and probably sealed his political fate, too

WASHINGTON—ON A SEPTEMBER Sunday in 1974, President Gerald Ford told the nation it was time to "shut and seal this book" of Watergate by pardoning his predecessor, Richard Nixon.

Ford's stunning announcement may also have sealed his political fate, since the nation's only president never elected to nationwide office—a Republican—lost the 1976 election to Democrat Jimmy Carter. Many said the unpopular pardon was a cause of Ford's defeat.

But years later, Ford's act of conscience was viewed differently. In 2001, Ford, who died Tuesday, received the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award named after the former Democratic president. He was chosen by a bipartisan committee of political and community leaders, who had the luxury of looking back at the fateful day of Sept. 8, 1974.

Ford was not known for his eloquence, but he was eloquent when he addressed the nation that morning in the Oval Office.

He said his was a solitary decision. "There are no historic or legal precedents to which I can turn in this matter, none that precisely fit the circumstances of a private citizen who has resigned the presidency of the United States," he said.

The accusations of Nixon's Watergate misdeeds "hang like a sword over our former president's head, threatening his health," Ford said. But his primary concern was for the nation.

'My conscience tells me...'

"My conscience tells me clearly and certainly that I cannot prolong the bad dreams that continue to reopen a chapter that is closed," he said. "My conscience tells me that only I, as president, have the constitutional power to firmly shut and seal this book.

"My conscience tells me it is my duty, not merely to proclaim domestic tranquility but to use every means that I have to insure it."

Ford revisited the pardon in his autobiography.

"I simply was not convinced that the country wanted to see an ex-president behind bars," he wrote. "We are not a vengeful people; forgiveness is one of the roots of the American tradition. And Nixon, in my opinion, had already suffered enormously."

And, Ford said, so had the nation.

"It was the state of the country's health at home and around the world that worried me," he said.

Ford knew the pardon could damage his election chances.

"I'm aware of that," Ford recalled snapping at a cautious aide. "It could easily cost me the next election if I run again. But damn it, I don't need the polls to tell me whether I'm right or wrong." *AP*

Don't lend money today, it's April Fool's, RP style

From page A1

of the massacre of infants during Herod's reign in Judea. (*See In the Know on this page.*)

Usual trick

It is also a puzzlement why the day of infanticide is the Philippines' version of April Fool's Day. Pinoy pranksters are expected to get away with playing tricks on others.

In the Philippines, as in Mexico, the usual trick is borrowing money from a friend and not paying it back. In Mexico, the victim, who also has to endure name-calling, is given a candy or a silly gift in return.

Unluckiest

Innocents' Day is deemed by some cultures as the unluckiest day of the year because of the atrocity it memorializes. Some believe any project started on this day would either go wrong or remain unfinished. This is why some people refuse to marry on the 28th of December.

It is said that France's Louis XI, who ruled in the 15th century, refused to do business on Innocents' Day. And until now, people in some parts of England refrain from doing housework today especially washing clothes.

Whipping

Innocents' Day is also associated with European whipping customs. In Germany, children beat passersby with birch boughs, and get apples, nuts and other goodies in return. In France, children who do not wake up early enough are whipped by their parents. In the province of Normandy, the early risers among the youth themselves beat up the late risers.

Innocents' Day beatings reportedly trace their roots to a pre-Christian custom. The whipping is not meant as a punishment, but is believed to drive out evil spirits.

Some people commemorate the spilling of blood by pouring cherry or strawberry sauce on puddings.

The day is also called "Childermas" (Children's Mass) because of the youth's active participation in Masses held to commemorate the massacre of innocents as ordered by Herod who felt threatened by a newborn, the three Magis called the "King of the Jews."

In his frenzied jealousy, Herod ordered all male infants two years and younger slaughtered.

IN THE KNOW

Innocents killed instead of Jesus

THE MASSACRE OF THE INnocents, an episode of infanticide during Herod's reign as king of Judea, is in the Gospel according to Matthew.

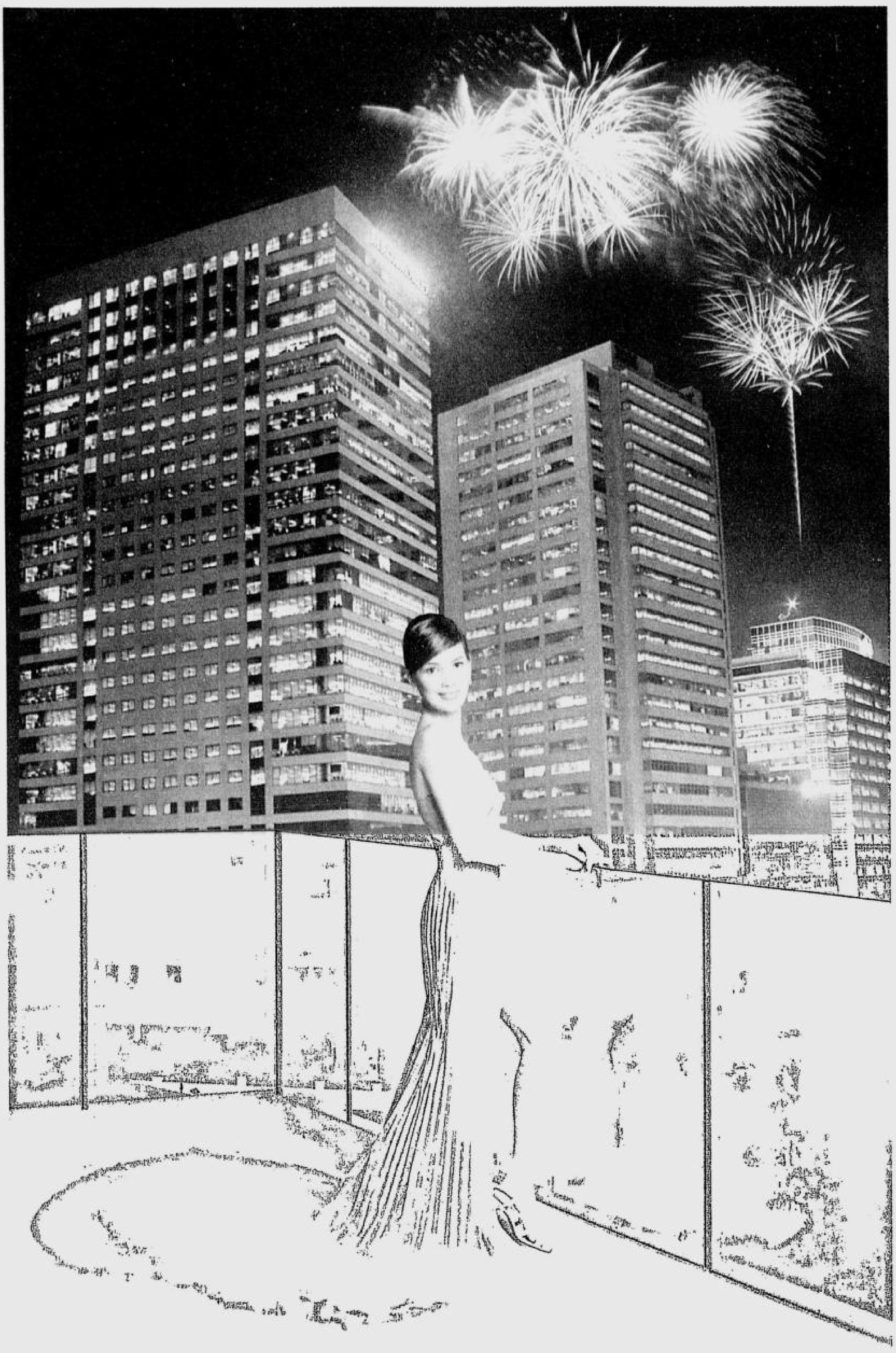
The Church venerates these children as martyrs, as they "died not only for Christ but in his stead." The Latin Church instituted the feast of the Holy Innocents sometime during the 4th and 5th centuries, and although the exact date of the event is still the subject of debate, it is traditionally celebrated by the Roman Catholic Church on Dec. 28.

According to Matthew, the Wise Men had come to Herod before finding Jesus Christ, and asked him if he knew about the child. Threatened by this newborn that the Magis called "the King of Jews," Herod asked them to return to him after identifying the child, so "he could come worship Him." The Magi, warned in dreams of the king's real intentions to kill the infant, took a different route on their way back to avoid betraying the child.

Enraged, Herod ordered the slaughter of all male infants aged two years and younger in the village of Bethlehem in hopes of also killing the child. However, Mary, Joseph and the newborn Jesus escaped the massacre as they had fled to Egypt when warned of the danger by an angel, according to Matthew.

In Bethlehem, the feast is a Holy Day of Obligation.

Inquirer Research

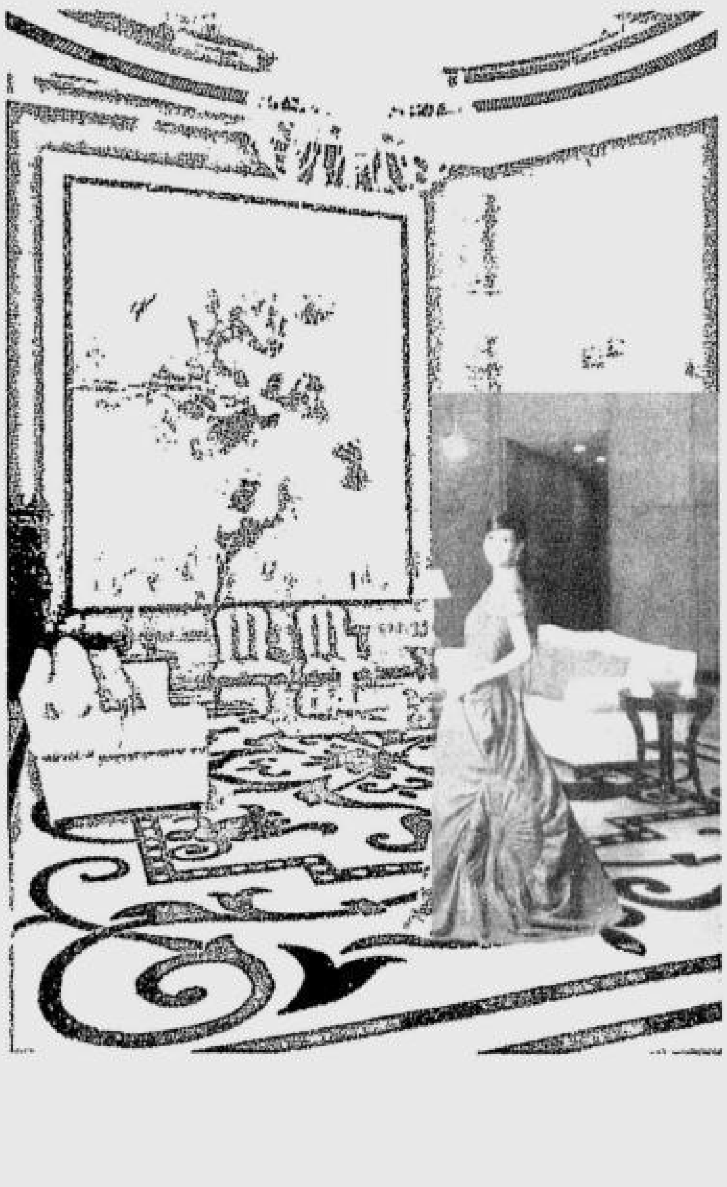


EASTWOOD

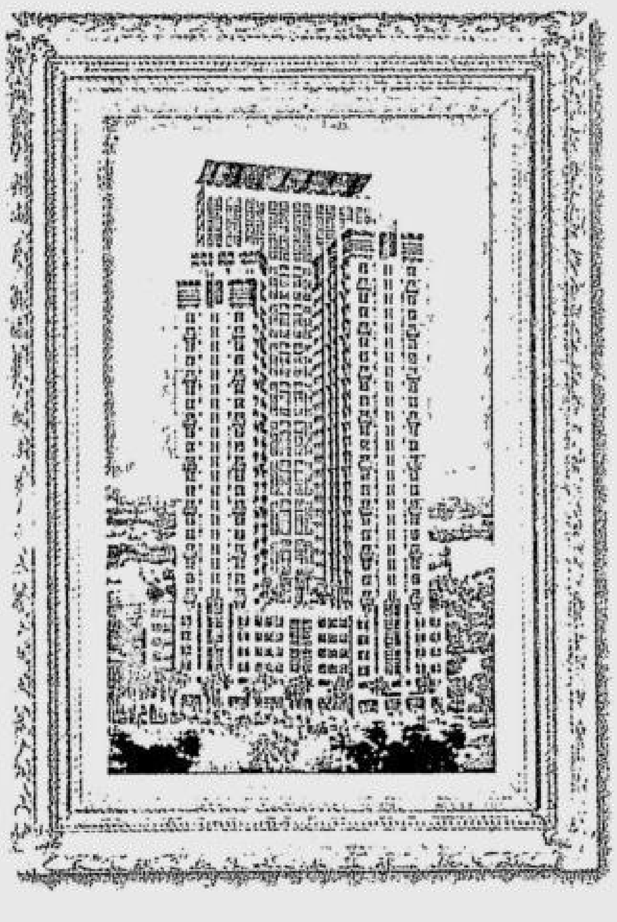
LEGRAND

at Eastwood City

IF YOU'RE NOT HERE, YOU'RE NOT IN.



A new breed of residential tower is answering the call for power living at its grandest. Eastwood LeGrand. The anchor project of Eastwood City's new Palm Tree district, Eastwood LeGrand is a startling symbol of an unprecedented lifestyle. Fusing an imposing Art Deco facade and French-style interiors. Balancing chic and comfort. Surrounding you with all manner of luxury evident in its posh living space and accouterments to put mind and body at ease. And just a stroll away is a picturesque paradise bursting with restaurants, boutiques and entertainment centers: City Walk. Where you can taste the City's finest offerings from live concerts to weekend markets to art and pet shows. Stretch the boundaries of what you can do. And what you can enjoy. Only at Eastwood LeGrand.



Own a studio unit for as low as US$350 a month.

A Luxury Development of:

MEGAWORLD CORPORATION

www.megaworldcorp.com

ISO 9001:2000 CERTIFIED

Exclusive Marketing Manager:

Eastwood Property Holdings, Inc.

www.eastwood-properties.com

For Announcement Purposes Only

Visit the Eastwood City Grand Showroom today.

Eastwood City Information Centre/Grand Showroom, Eastwood City, E. Rodriguez, Jr. Ave. (C-5), Quezon City.

For inquiries, call (632) 421-4243 · 421-4247 · E-mail: Legrand@eastwoodcity.com.

Voted among
Asia's Best-managed Companies
in 2006 by *FinanceAsia*

Holiday meal fatal to Quezon City girl

Victim's kin, neighbors down after eating leftover spaghetti

By DJ Yap

CHRISTMAS DAY ENDED ABRUPTLY FOR the family of 12-year-old Angelica Corminal who died after eating leftover spaghetti in their house at Sto. Nino Extension, Barangay Holy Spirit, Quezon City.

Ten members of her family and their neighbors also fell ill and were admitted to different hospitals, including Corminal's uncle who had cooked the meal on Christmas Eve, according to police.

Toxins

A report from radio station dzBB quoted Dr. Licerio Santos of the Quezon City General Hospital as saying that the victims suffered from acute gastroenteritis because of food toxins.

Based on initial reports, Corminal, a grade school pupil, was enjoying the pasta dish with her family at around 2 p.m. on Dec. 25 in their home when she suddenly complained of stomach pains.

Investigators said the girl also complained of a headache and then started to vomit.

At least 10 relatives and neighbors came down with the symptoms, including her uncle Alberto Lubiano who had cooked the spaghetti the night before, police said.

Treatment

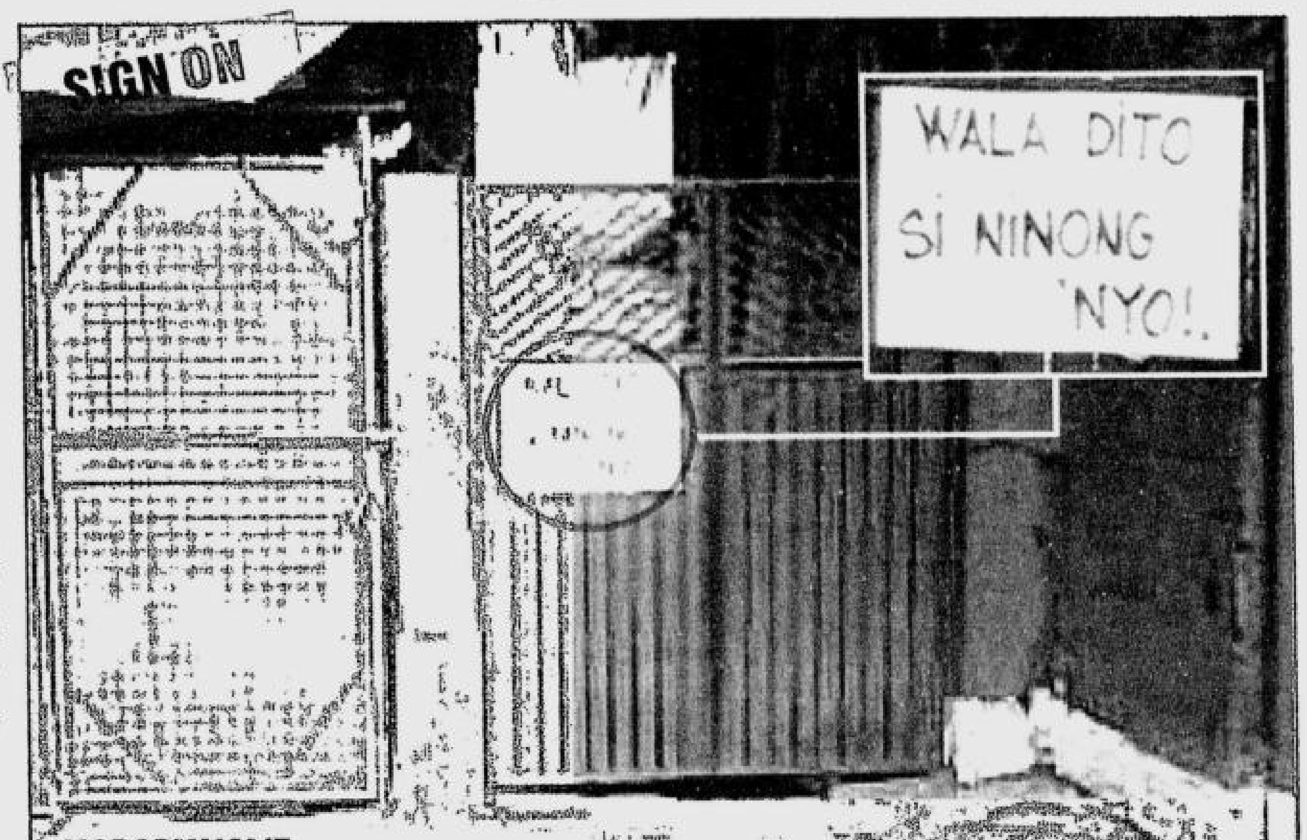
Relatives and neighbors rushed them to hospitals, including the East Avenue Medical Center for treatment, according to a report by case investigators PO2 Julius Rempillo and Pascual Fabreag.

Corminal was later transferred to the New Era Hospital but she died at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, police said.

Critical

Some of the victim's relatives who were hospitalized have been declared out of danger, but others are still in critical condition, said SPO2 Rafael de Peralta, a desk officer in the criminal investigation division of the Quezon City Police District.

Their names were not immediately available.



NOBODY HOME
A sign posted at the gate of a house on Old Balara Road in Quezon City tells it like it is. Inset photo shows sign up close. Could be the master of the house just wanted to cut down on expenses this holiday season. JEROME C. DUMLAO/CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Carnival ride that killed girl had permit; owner faces raps

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

CITY OFFICIALS HAD INSPECTED the carnival ride in Marikina City which had a malfunction on Christmas Day, killing a 10-year-old girl and injuring six other children.

Ride assistant operator Jeffrey Magas, 20, said they assembled the octopus ride as early as September.

He added that before the mini carnival at the Marikina Riverpark in Barangay Dela Peña opened this month, city officials inspected the ride and did not find any problem.

Marikina Mayor Marides Fernando earlier said the carnival had all the necessary permits from City Hall.

But during a visit to the site after the accident, she noticed that the octopus ride was built outside the carnival's white fence.

She added that investigators would have to determine if the ride was covered by permits.

City police chief Supt. Sotero Ramos, on the other hand, cleared the offices which gave permits for the ride to operate.

"It would be impossible to determine if there was something wrong with a joint or some device in the ride. This was really an accident," Ramos said.

Magas admitted that the octopus ride was the last one they put up on the riverpark.

"We would like to extend our apologies to the children and to their parents. We hope they can forgive us," he told the INQUIRER.

Police have filed criminal negligence resulting in homicide and serious physical injuries against him, two other operators and the amusement park owner identified as Roy Atienza.

Now detained at the Marikina City Police, Magas said he was worried about his family in Laguna.

"They are expecting me to send money for their food," he added.

Police said Atienza was still at large, but the insurance company of the small carnival already made initial payments for the hospital expenses of two of the victims still undergoing treatment.

It had also extended assistance to the family of the fatality, 10-year-old Katherine Diana Picandal.

Picandal died a day after the accident in a hospital.

Quoting doctors, Fernando said the victim's liver was crushed, possibly because of the impact which pinned her body against the metal frame of the cart.

Her wake is being held at a chapel in Cainta, Rizal. Her father Greg said Picandal would be buried on Saturday.

"People from the company which owns the carnival have been assisting us," Greg told the INQUIRER.

He said his 14-year-old daughter Kimberly, who was injured in the accident, was still being treated at the Medical City.

She underwent a blood transfusion because her liver also bled, Greg added.

Katherine and Kimberly were on one of the four carts attached to one of the six metal arms of the ride, which was shaped like an octopus.

The cart they were in, as well as the other three, crashed to the ground when the metal rotator holding the four carts broke apart.

Four of those injured have already been released after being treated in a hospital for bruises. Another one, 12-year-old Diana Lyn Reyes, is still confined in a hospital, SPO2 Arnel Manuel told the INQUIRER.

PROBERS look for clues at the site of the accident. EDSON C. TANDOC JR

Love at first sip!
Novellino

Novellino, a romantic wine experience like no other.

Fall in love with its lusciously sweet character and its delightful finish
--- soft, smooth and refreshing. Without the bitter taste.

One sip... falling in love has never tasted this good.

Novellino

Inmates stage noise barrage vs detainees' transfer

By Jocelyn R. Uy

INMATES OF THE PASAY CITY JAIL staged a brief protest yesterday after authorities transferred four *mayores* or cell leaders to another facility after they uncovered an alleged plot to kill another inmate inside the facility.

The 600 or so inmates held a noise barrage as some of them hurled out of the windows of their cells empty cans of sardines, plastic bottles, slippers and other debris.

Jail officials fired two to three warning shots to quell the protest which lasted for 30 minutes. No one was hurt in the incident although Insp. Adelo Natividad, administration chief of the city jail, said the inmates destroyed some of the facility's property.

Visitors were asked to go home after the commotion.

Four cell leaders of the Batang City Jail and the Sputnik Gang were earlier transferred to the Metro Manila District Jail in Camp Bagong Diwa, Bicutan for reportedly plotting to kill Rolando Manlapaz, an inmate facing kidnapping charges, Natividad told reporters yesterday.

He identified the four as Jake Villanueva, Ramoncito Glino, Reynaldo Longcop and Willie Ravacio.

Manlapaz allegedly earned the four suspects' ire because they suspected him of informing jail officials about the smuggling of drugs inside the facility.

The other day, a woman identified only as Joy was caught trying to sneak methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu into the jail after personnel of the Pasay Special Operations Unit received a tip.

"We received raw information that the two gangs are conniving with each other to kill Manlapaz for allegedly squealing about the illegal drugs being smuggled into the jail. But we will have to look into that," Natividad said.

The tipster also reportedly informed authorities that at times, the drugs would be thrown inside the windows of the prison cells which looked out on the parking lot in front of the facility. Letters were also exchanged between an inmate and his visitor using this method.

"That is why we will request higher authorities to install a perimeter fence here," Natividad said.

During a visit to the facility, the INQUIRER received a letter from an inmate who hurled a piece of paper out of the window of his cell into the parking lot. The sender identified himself only as a member of the Batang City Jail Gang.

In a letter written in Filipino, he asked jail officials to return their *mayores* and *segunda mayores* to the facility and accused them of mismanagement.

A GUARD at the Pasay City jail watches inmates waving to media men across their cell covering the protest action. REM ZAMORA

TOYS FOR CHRISTMAS
Two children happily compare toys they received from kindhearted people who distributed gifts on Christmas Day to the poor in Manila. EDWIN BACASMAS

'Boga' may be in, but beware of consequences

By Tina G. Santos
and Tarra V. Quismundo

A MANILA HEALTH OFFICIAL yesterday cautioned parents against letting their children use the *boga*—an improvised cannon fashioned out of a PVC (polyvinyl chloride) pipe which has become a very popular noisemaker among youngsters this holiday season.

Dr. Virgilio Martin, disaster coordinator of the Manila Health Office, said that the *boga* was responsible for eight of the 24 firecracker-related injuries reported from Dec. 1 to 26.

"Last year, we had no reported injuries caused by the *boga* but now, since it's the 'in' thing among the youth, we have quite a number of cases this year," Martin said, adding that the figure could still go up if parents do not warn their children.

He noted that most of the victims were children 10 years old and below.

"We're advising the parents not to let their children play with the *boga*," he added.

The *boga* sets off a loud explosion when the user squirts denatured alcohol at the tail end of the pipe and then lights up the mixture with a cigarette lighter or a gas stove igniter that can be activated at the click of a triggering mechanism.

"Most of the victims peeped through the PVC when it failed to explode. Unfortunately, it backfired, causing injuries to their eyes," Martin explained.

"The victims suffered from post traumatic conjunctivitis, which, when not treated immediately, may eventually lead to blindness."

Mayor Lito 'Atienza, meanwhile, invited the public to go to the Baywalk on Dec. 31.

"Just watch the fireworks display at the Baywalk. You don't have to spend for firecrackers because the show is free," he said.

In Makati, the city government and the police began to look into regulating the sale and use of the device which the Department of Health wants banned.

Mayor Jejomar Binay yesterday ordered the police to find out how city officials and law enforcers could impose restrictions on the use of the *boga*, a common sight this season in neighborhoods throughout Metro Manila.

"We will now make a thorough study so that we can act accordingly. The *boga* is dangerous because if, for example, you put a tin can inside, you could shoot it out of the pipe," said Binay.

But he admitted that, "off hand," the city has no way of controlling the use and distribution of the device although he promised that the regulations would be drafted by the weekend, in time for New Year's Eve.

"We will study it so by Saturday and Sunday, we can proceed with the implementation," said the mayor.

The Makati Police Station also started distributing flyers that would discourage the public from using firecrackers which cause injuries every year.

"We will distribute the flyers to the public so that they will be aware of the dangers of firecrackers. As of today, there has been a report that the number of persons injured because of firecrackers has increased compared to last year," said Supt. Victor Loares, the deputy police chief.

He added that the police would be on full deployment throughout the holiday season.

"All our policemen will be deployed in the field to make sure that every corner of Makati is well secured," Loares told reporters.

METROBRIEFS

P4.6-M pirated software seized

SOME P4.6 million worth of pirated computer software, computers and accessories were confiscated by National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) agents when they raided an establishment in Quezon City recently. NBI Intellectual Property Rights Division chief Jose Justo Yap said the raid stemmed from a complaint filed by the Quisumbing Torres Law Firm in behalf of the Business Software Alliance for Microsoft Corp. and Adobe Systems Inc. Raided was the Prime Pacific Grill Corp. located at the second and third floors of FMA Building on Baler Street in San Francisco del Monte, Quezon City. NBI agents seized 47 desktop computers and 22 compact discs containing unauthorized reproductions or copies of unlicensed Microsoft and Adobe software. The owners of the establishment face criminal charges for violating Section 177 in relation to Section 217 of RA 8293, otherwise known as the Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines, Yap said.

Tina G. Santos

Legitimate arrest or kidnapping?

TENSION gripped a densely populated area in Navotas before dawn yesterday when around 20 men, some wielding high powered guns and clad in police uniforms, swooped down on a shanty and arrested a man. But a check with the local police showed no record of the arrest or the operation in the area. Lawmen only learned of the incident when Susana, the wife of Danny Abanag 31, of Sitio Putting Bato in North Bay Boulevard South, asked for help at 4:50 a.m. In her statement, Susana said armed men barged into their house at 1:30 a.m. and took her husband. They also took her cell phone and P1,500 in cash before leaving. According to Susana, her husband sells rice and grocery items. Asked to comment on the incident, Navotas police chief Supt. Genesis Tolejano said he was not informed about the operation. "We will look into the case and, at the same time, conduct a background check on the victim," he said.

Nancy C. Carvajal

Preacher in Blue Jeans goes online

BO SANCHEZ, dubbed as the "Preacher in Blue Jeans," goes live online every day through his new show, "Preacher In Blue Jeans." By logging on at www.bosanchez.ph, people can follow Sanchez as he goes around the world to witness God's miracles in his life and in the lives of people he meets. Sanchez started his vocation as a lay evangelist when he was only 12 years old. His parents, Gene and Pilar Sanchez, brought him to a prayer meeting where one of the leaders prophesied he would be preaching the Gospel to thousands. Sanchez is the founder of the Light of Jesus Community, Anawim—a home for the abandoned poor and the Shepherd's Voice Publications, publisher of the best selling inspirational magazine, Kerygma.

Trade fair set

BARGAIN hunters should not miss the 14th Fiesta Fair Manila at the Greenhills Shopping Complex from Jan. 12 to Feb. 4. Over 1,300 exhibitors are expected to join the trade fair which will offer garments, toys and gifts, house ware, home furnishings, jewelry, cell phones, footwear, plants and food.

Fire destroys 30 homes in Marikina barangay

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

MORE THAN 30 FAMILIES LOST their homes in a two-hour fire in Marikina City on Tuesday afternoon, allegedly triggered by a firecracker a boy had lit in one of the houses.

SFO1 Noel Alarcon told the INQUIRER that witnesses said they heard a bang seconds before the fire spread quickly in a neighborhood in Barangay Sta. Elena.

The fire began in a two-story apartment occupied by the family of Celestino Cruz on Cruz Street, Alarcon said.

Citing statements of witnesses, Alarcon said a firecracker could have ignited stocks of brooms stored in the house, which the owner sold in the market.

But he clarified that an investigation was still ongoing to determine the cause of the fire.

The fired quickly razed the apartment, including two adjacent units occupied by other families.

It then spread to the house in front, before spreading to 32 other houses, Alarcon said.

A fireman, FO2 Exequiel Estanislao sustained cuts in his fingers but fortunately, there were no other injuries.

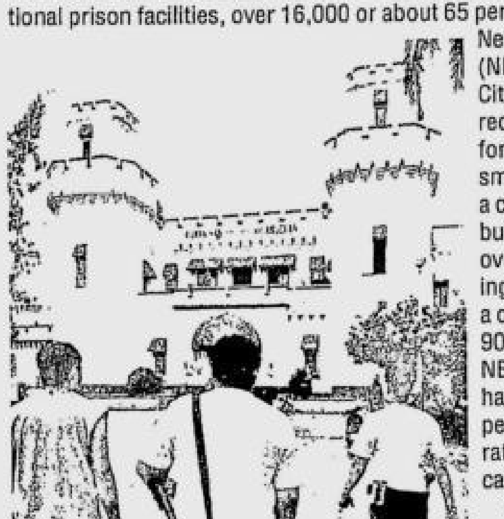
Six government fire trucks as well as 11 volunteer fire trucks rushed to the area and managed to put out the fire.

Investigators estimated the damage at P1 million.

Days earlier, 30-minute fire also razed a grocery store in Pasig City.

FO1 Salvador Norberte said an explosion rang inside the establishment in Barangay Manggahan at 1:55 a.m. Monday. The store was closed at that time.

DID YOU KNOW



OF MORE than 25,000 inmates (2002 figures) confined in seven national prison facilities, over 16,000 or about 65 percent are in the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) in Muntinlupa City. Manila's Correctional Institution for Women is the smallest facility with a capacity of 500, but it is the most overcrowded, holding 951 inmates, for a congestion rate of 90 percent. The NBP, on the other hand, has an 85-percent congestion rate, with a 8,700 capacity.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Relief on way for QC hospital patients

By DJ Yap

UNDER "HOSPITAL ARREST" because because you can't pay your medical bills?

Worry no more if you're from Quezon City. Under a proposed new ordinance, detaining patients who can't pay their bills in health facilities may soon be forbidden.

The proposed "QC Magna Carta of Patients' Rights and Obligations" offers a compromise "acceptable" to both hospital administrators and indigent city residents.

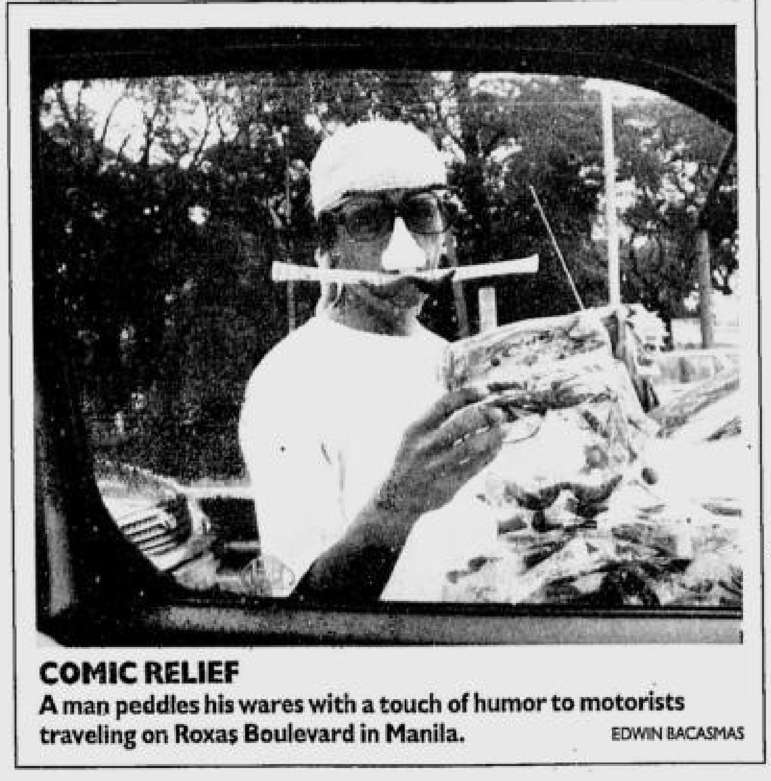
The measure, authored by Councilor Edcel Lagman Jr., gives patients the right to leave the hospital after treatment. However, they are required to make arrangements with the medical facility over the settlement of their obligations.

Lagman said the "common practice" among hospitals to "detain" patients who fail to fully pay their bills must be stopped.

The proposed mediation provides for a "grievance mechanism" in which patients will be allowed to air their complaints arising against the hospital, Lagman said. Hospital administrators shall also be given the opportunity to explain, giving both parties the chance to settle the dispute, he added.

There would be two forms of mediation: Hospital-based and nonhospital based. The hospital-based mediation shall be chaired by a grievance officer permanently designated by the hospital, with two physicians as members upon agreement by both parties.

The nonhospital based mediation, on the other hand, shall be chaired by the city health officer and with representatives from health groups as members.



COMIC RELIEF
A man peddles his wares with a touch of humor to motorists traveling on Roxas Boulevard in Manila. EDWIN BACASMAS

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Saddam ordered hanged in 30 days

BAGHDAD—IRAQ'S HIGHEST COURT REJECTed Saddam Hussein's appeal and said the former dictator must be hanged within 30 days for ordering the killing of scores of Shiite Muslims in 1982.

The sentence has already stoked Iraq's sectarian rage, with the Shiite majority demanding Saddam's death and his fellow Sunni Arabs calling the trial tainted.

"From tomorrow, any day could be the day" Saddam is sent to the gallows, the chief judge said Tuesday. Saddam was condemned to death for his role in the execution of 148 Shiite Muslims from the small northern town of Dujail, after a 1982 assassination attempt.

The decision came on a particularly bloody day in Baghdad, where at least 54 Iraqis died in bombings and police discovered 49 apparent victims of sectarian reprisal killings. Separately, the US military announced the deaths of seven American soldiers.

In upholding the sentence, imposed Nov. 5, the Supreme Court of Cassation also affirmed death sentences for two of his codefendants, including his half brother. And it said life imprisonment for a third was too lenient and demanded he be given the death penalty, too.

Saddam's hanging "must be implemented within 30 days," said Aref Shahin, chief judge of the appeals court. "From tomorrow, any day could be the day of implementation."

The White House called the ruling a milestone in Iraq's efforts "to replace the rule of a tyrant with the rule of law."

"Saddam Hussein has received due process and legal rights that he denied the Iraqi people for so long. So this is an important day for the Iraqi people," said deputy White House press secretary Scott Stanzel, who was aboard Air Force One flying from Washington to Waco, Texas.

Some international legal observers, however, called Saddam's trial unfair because of alleged interference by the Shiite-dominated government.

The ruling raised doubts about whether other victims of Saddam's ruthless regime—including families of Kurds gassed in the late 1980s—will ever testify in court about their suffering.

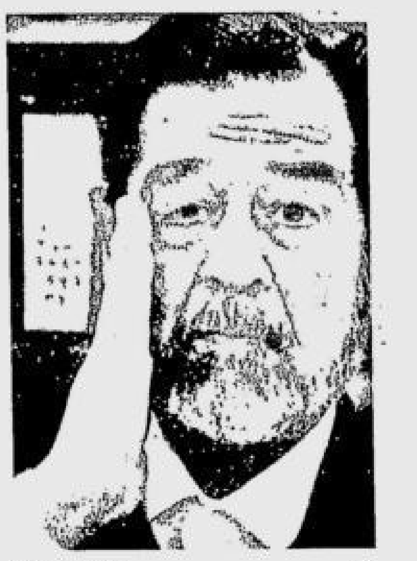
But the announcement delighted Shiites, who endured persecution under Saddam and are eager to remove a symbol of the old regime.

Some Shiites are concerned that insurgents, many of them Sunni Arabs, will try to disrupt or prevent the execution.

"We were looking forward to this day so as to achieve justice, though it comes late," said Ali al-Adeeb, a Shiite lawmaker. "The government should speed up implementing the verdict in order not to give any chance to the terrorists."

Under Iraqi law, the appeals court decision must be ratified by President Jalal Talabani and Iraq's two vice presidents. One of the two deputies is, like Saddam, a Sunni Arab.

Talabani, a Kurd, has said he is opposed to the death penalty. But he previously deputized Vice President Adil Abdul-Mahdi, a Shiite Muslim, to sign execution orders on his behalf. *AP*



SADDAM AP

Taiwan clears rubble after strong quake

TAIPEI—MAINTENANCE CREWS began clearing the rubble from a southern Taiwanese town Wednesday, hours after a powerful earthquake struck the area, killing two and triggering a regional tsunami alert.

The quake, which hit late Tuesday just offshore from the Pingtung County township of Hengchun, came on the second anniversary of the devastating tsunami that took more than 200,000 lives in southern Asia.

Two members of one family were killed in the town when their four-story home collapsed. Six other members of the family were rescued from under the rubble early Wednesday, the National Fire Agency said in a statement.

One member of the family—an 89-year-old man—escaped from the building unharmed.

A total of 42 people were injured in southern Taiwan, the fire agency said. Three houses collapsed, and 12 fires broke out.

The power supply to 3,000 homes was disrupted, but was later restored, according to the agency.

The US Geological Survey said the quake, which hit at 8:26 p.m. (1226 GMT), registered magnitude 7.1, while Taiwan's Central Weather Bureau measured it at 6.7. It was followed eight minutes later by an aftershock registering 7.0, the USGS said.

Early Wednesday another aftershock, measuring 5.9, was registered in the area, the Central Weather Bureau said.

Japan's Meteorological Bureau said a one-meter tsunami might be headed toward the eastern coast of the Philippines, but later lifted the warning.

"The expected waves did not materialize ... the danger has passed," said Hiroshi Koide of the agency's earthquake section. "We predicted a tsunami based on the depth and magnitude of the earthquake. But ultimately, it appears no large tsunami was triggered."

Philippine police said coastal areas had been alerted.

The warning underscored the higher level of caution about tsunami waves in the region since a massive earthquake off Indonesia exactly two years earlier triggered a powerful tsunami in the Indian Ocean that killed 230,000 people in a dozen countries.

Tuesday's quake was felt throughout Taiwan. It swayed buildings and knocked objects off the shelves in the capital, Taipei, in the northern part of the island.

Several high-rise hotels swayed violently in the southern city of Kaohsiung, the CTI Cable News reported. *AP*

TAIWANESE rescuers clear rubble from a collapsed building after a 6.7 magnitude earthquake struck, Wednesday, Dec. 27, in Pingtung County, 350 km south west of Taipei, Taiwan. AP

Iran to reduce UN nuclear cooperation

TEHRAN—IRAN'S PARLIAMENT ON Wednesday approved a bill obliging the government to "revise its cooperation" with the UN nuclear watchdog in retaliation for Security Council sanctions imposed on Tehran.

The text of the bill, which also tells the government to "accelerate" Iran's controversial nuclear drive, was approved by an overwhelming majority in the conservative-controlled parliament, with 161 in favor and 15 against.

The move is set to further inflame tensions over the Iranian nuclear program, which the Islamic republic has vowed to expand in defiance of the sanctions agreed by the UN Security Council last week.

Iran has refused to heed the council's call to suspend uranium enrichment, a process that Western countries fear could be used to develop a nuclear weapon. Iran insists its atomic drive is entirely peaceful.

The formulation of the bill gives the government a free hand to limit cooperation with the Vienna-based agency as it sees fit. This could involve limiting UN inspections of its atomic sites, a move urged by several lawmakers.

"Officials from the foreign ministry and the supreme national security council should be left to interpret the text," said Deputy Foreign Minister Hamid Reza Asefi, who promoted the bill on behalf of the government.

Parliament speaker Gholam Ali Hadad Adel echoed comments from other top officials that Iran did not intend to quit the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty but emphasized the government could interpret the bill as it wanted.

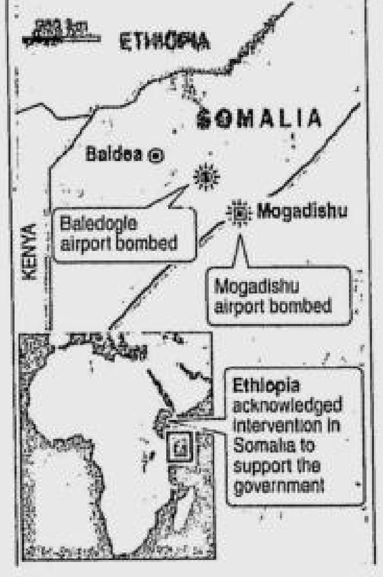
"The government should react (to the bill) in a way appropriate to the international pressure.

"This could mean quitting the NPT or staying there. We will give a free hand to the government to take its decisions," he added. *AFP*

Ethiopia predicts victory in Somalia

SOMALIA CONFLICT

Ethiopian warplanes attacked two Islamist-held airfields in Somalia on Monday, witnesses said, wounding at least one person and further escalating a conflict that threatens to engulf the Horn of Africa in war



MOGADISHU—ETHIOPIA SAID on Tuesday it was half way to crushing Somali Islamists as its forces advanced on the religious movement's Mogadishu stronghold after a week of war in the Horn of Africa.

Somalia's envoy to Addis Ababa said Ethiopian troops were within 70 km of the capital and could capture it in 24 to 48 hours.

Islamists countered that they were ready for a long war and any attempt to oust them would prove disastrous for their foes.

The Red Cross said more than 800 people had been wounded and thousands were fleeing the combat zone, with the United Nations saying the displacement could trigger an aid crisis in a region where relief resources are already stretched.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi said his forces supporting Somalia's weak interim government had killed up to 1,000 Islamist fighters. There was no independent verification.

The Islamists also say they have killed hundreds.

"We have already completed half our mission, and as soon as we finish the second half, our troops will leave Somalia," Meles told a news conference in the Ethiopian capital.

"We will not keep a single fighter in Somalia once our mission getting rid of the terrorists is completed." He said a force of between 3,000 and 4,000 Ethiopians had "broken the back" of the Somalia Islamic Courts Council (SICC) around the government's south-central base Baidoa, and the Islamists were now in "full retreat".

Ethiopia backs Somalia's secular interim government against the Islamists who hold most of southern Somalia after seizing Mogadishu in June. Addis Ababa and Washington say the Islamists are backed by al-Qaida and by Ethiopia's enemy, Eritrea.

The Islamists claim broad popular support and say their aim is to restore order to Somalia under sharia law after years of anarchy since the 1991 ousting of dictator Siad Barre.

Addis Ababa fears a hardline Muslim state on its doorstep and accuses the SICC of wanting to annex Ethiopia's ethnically Somali Ogaden region.

The African Union has backed Ethiopia's right to intervene.

Diplomats say that, allied to Washington's tacit support, may embolden Meles to try to seize Mogadishu.

But SICC spokesperson Abdi Kafi said any attempt by Ethiopia to take Mogadishu "will be their destruction and doomsday." The diplomats said the fighting could now draw in Eritrea.

They added that Kenya, which is taking in Somali refugees across its north border, was trying to broker ceasefire talks. *Reuters*

Castro could govern again, says doctor

MADRID—A SPANISH SURgeon who has just examined Cuban leader Fidel Castro said on Tuesday he is making a good recovery from intestinal surgery, does not have cancer, and could return to governing his country.

Castro's disappearance from the public eye after emergency surgery for intestinal bleeding in July sparked frenzied speculation about his health, but surgeon Jose Luis Garcia Sabrido said the communist leader was in good condition.

"His physical activity is excellent, his intellectual activity intact, I'd say fantastic, he's recovering from his previous operation," Garcia Sabrido, head of surgery at Madrid's Gregorio Maranon public hospital, told a news conference after returning from Cuba.

"He asks every day to return to work, but doctors advise him not to, to take it easy," said Garcia Sabrido.

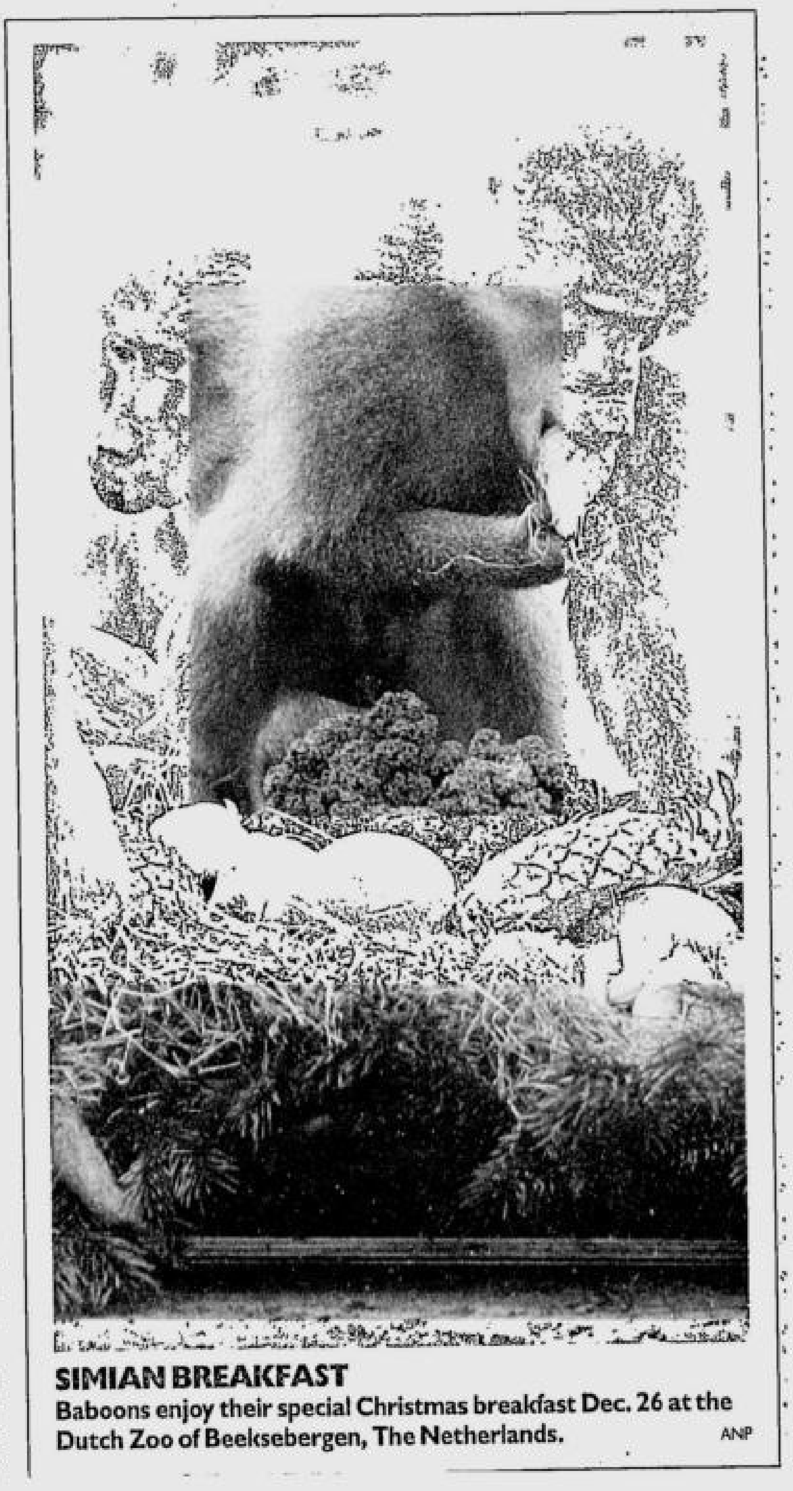
Garcia Sabrido, who flew to Cuba last week to examine the 80-year-old leader, said he did not need further surgery but required physical therapy, a strict diet and rest.

"He does not have cancer, he has a problem with his digestive system," Garcia Sabrido told Reuters after the news conference. "President Castro has no malign inflammation, it's a benign process in which he has had a series of complications."

In Havana, Cuban officials declined to comment on the doctor's statements, saying Castro's condition was a state secret. But his prognosis was in line what they have been saying for months.

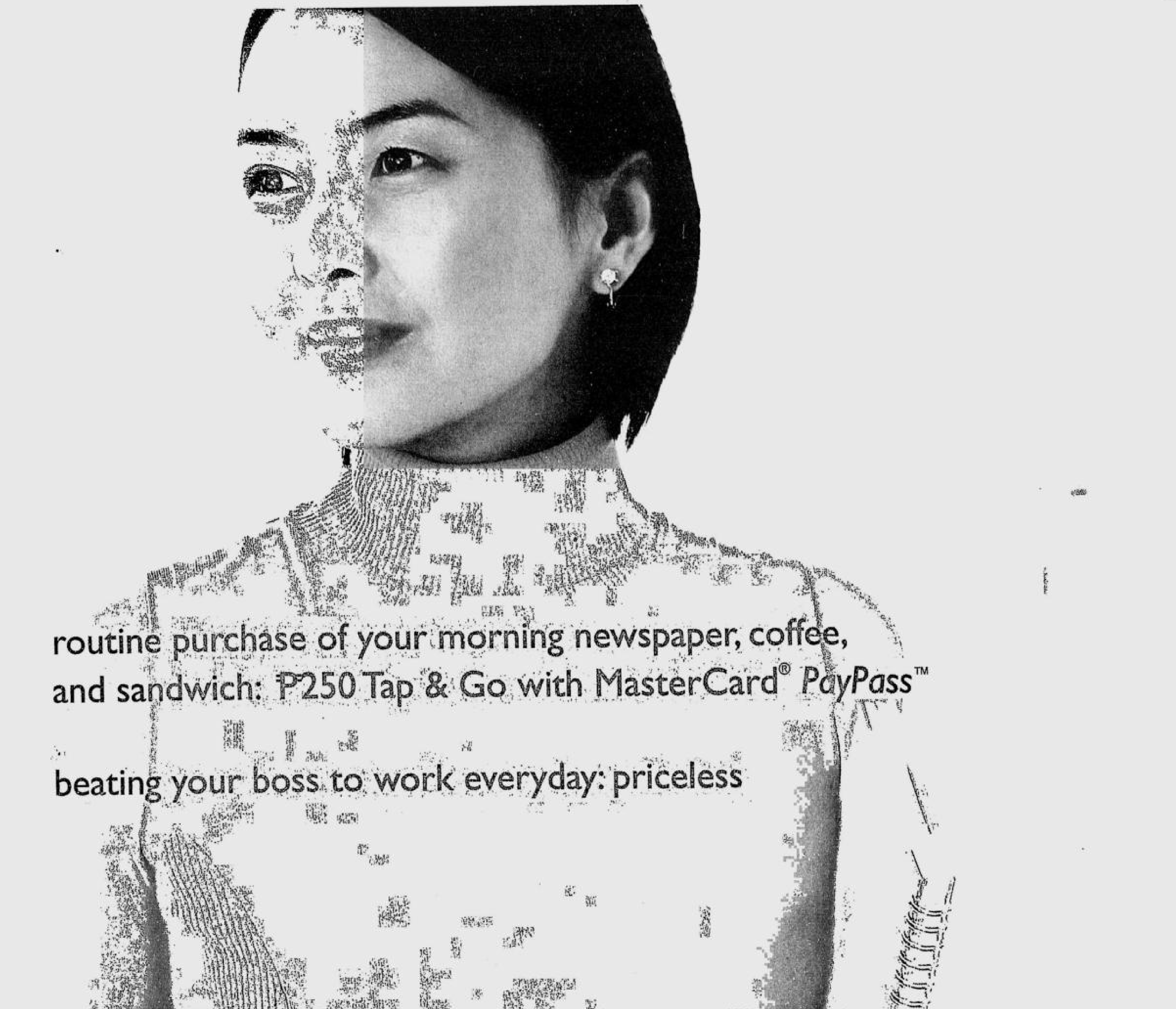
The Cuban population, used to being told little about the inner workings of the government, was unaware of Garcia Sabrido's visit to Cuba.

Castro supporters, worried by his disappearance and uncertain of their country's future, expressed relief at the doctor's comments. *Reuters*



SIMIAN BREAKFAST

Baboons enjoy their special Christmas breakfast Dec. 26 at the Dutch Zoo of Beeksebergen, The Netherlands. ANP


routine purchase of your morning newspaper, coffee, and sandwich: ₱250 Tap & Go with MasterCard® *PayPass*™
beating your boss to work everyday: priceless

Introducing MasterCard® *PayPass*™

MasterCard is leading a payments revolution – the new Tap & Go technology that gives people an easier, more convenient way to pay. It works just like your traditional MasterCard card – but no more swiping or giving your card to cashiers. No fumbling of coins at fast food restaurants or waiting for change at car parks.

With acceptance locations in the Philippines and all over the world including the US, Asia, Australia, Europe, Africa and Middle East, MasterCard PayPass makes the transaction process simpler and quicker for all.

there are some things money can't buy. for everything else there's MasterCard.™

MasterCard
paypass

MasterCard paypass

MasterCard

WHAT'S INSIDE

Pacers shoot down Rockets; AI shines /A23

E-mail: pr_sports@inquirer.com.ph

SPORTS

Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres

Text us your feedback: inquirer sprt name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Nash named Canada's top sportsman /A23

Pasa plots Thailand SEAG plan

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PHILIPPINE SWIMMING HAS LAUNCHED its plan of action based on lessons learned from this year's Doha Asian Games and with bright hopes for next year's Southeast Asian Games in Thailand.

The Philippine Amateur Swimming Association has declared 2007 as its club development year to give focus on swimming clubs as Pasa's vehicles to deliver programs and strategies to the youth.

It will be the second year of the long-term Pasa reorganization under the helm of president Mark Joseph, national training director Ral Rosario, secretary general Akiko Thomson and national head coach Carlos Brosas.

While the country failed to bring home a medal from the Asiad in Qatar, Joseph said the association is well on track toward its target which may bear fruits in the coming SEA Games.

Joseph said the swimmers who saw action in the Doha Asiad have an average of 17 years. At that age, Joseph added, they are already exposed to world-class competitions like the World Juniors and the recent Qatar Games.

"These young swimmers should be a force to reckon with in the coming SEA Games in Thailand," said Joseph, whose tankers delivered three golds in the 2005 SEAG held in the country.

But to bring in more talents, Joseph said they would concentrate in developing clubs with programs that include parent education, team building, strategic planning, conflict solution and coaching.

"We will help clubs become legal entities with corporate lives. They are the center of development," said Joseph who last year put premium on coaching development.

The Pasa will also introduce school swimming program utilizing the 25-meter (short course format) in swim meets, which is already included in international competitions.

Swimmers will now have time standards or cards which will be the basis for the support from the Philippine Sports Commission. That aim, according to Joseph, is to end "swim meets for profit" which are generally held around the country.

For the Beijing Games, according to Joseph, the country has an 18-month window of opportunity to meet the qualifying standards. During the Athens Olympics in 2004, the country fielded five swimmers namely SEAG champs Miguel Molina and Miguel Mendoza, Timmy Chua and Fil-Americans Jackie Pangilinan and JB Walsh.

YANCY de Ocampo (left) returns as the Phone Pals' other tower of power. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Yancy goes back to TNT from Air21

By Musong R. Castillo

YANCY DE OCAMPO, THE ONCE very promising center who has never really played to his potential, is headed for a reunion with Derrick Pumaren at Talk 'N Text.

A four-player trade was consummated yesterday between Talk 'N Text and Air21 that had De Ocampo becoming a Phone Pal again and rejoining the man that made him the top overall choice in the 2003 rookie pool.

Ironically, Pumaren called the shots for the Express then and his task now is to bring the Phone Pals back to glory after replacing Joel Banal in the middle of last season with De Ocampo expected to play a vital cog in achieving that goal.

Pending the clearance of a league rule on transfers, Leo Avenido is also on the way to Talk 'N Text as part of the deal that will see the Phone Pals giving up second string big men Abby Santos and Mark Andaya and a future first round pick.

Whether this deal was being cooked up way before or otherwise, De Ocampo's transfer couldn't have come at a better time for Pumaren, who lost starting center Don Allado on Christmas because of a fractured right hand.

"The timing is perfect, especially now that Don (Allado) is out," Pumaren told the INQUIRER over the phone. "Yancy will bring a lot to the team, his inside presence, his experience. He will fill in beautifully."

This marks the second time that De Ocampo will be leaving the Air21 franchise and be enlisted at Talk 'N Text.

The Phone Pals made the quarterfinals outright following a 115-104 victory over No. 1 semifinal qualifier Barangay Ginebra that capped their comeback from the middle of the standings.

Air21, meanwhile, will be slugging it out with three other teams in the wildcard phase after winding up with a 7-11 greatly aided by Yancy, who has raised his outside game this season.

Aside from Air21, Alaska and Coca-Cola are also in the wildcard, where they will be joined by either Purefoods or Sta. Lucia, which disputes the last quarterfinal berth when the tournament resumes Jan. 3 at the Cuneta Astrodome.

PBA on track for record 32nd season

THE PHILIPPINE BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION (PBA) is on track of attaining its so-called "20/20 vision" as gate receipts and attendance have already surpassed the figures achieved for this same period of the last Philippine Cup.

Thirty-six games into the season-opening tournament at the Araneta Coliseum, gate receipts have considerably increased by 18.44 percent, while attendance also registered a significant rise of 20.42 percent.

Translated into numbers, sales at the gate amounted to P23,867,861 compared with the P20,151,855 earned during the same stretch of the 2006 Philippine Cup.

The games also drew attendance of 254,306 or an average crowd of 7,064 every playing date. Prior to the season, the all-Filipino tournament averages a crowd of 5,866 every game date or a total of 211,191.

Big gains

The significant gains achieved in both gate receipts and attendance augur well for the league's objective of increasing last season's live gate attendance by 20 percent and hopefully boost its net income by another 20 percent or what commissioner Noli Eala commonly referred to as the PBA's 20/20 vision.

Eala credited the well-balanced lineup, all-out display of enthusiasm and the passion of the players as among the major factors for the success being reaped by the league early in its 32nd season.

The big Christmas Day crowd of 17,779 that watched the doubleheader between San Miguel and Air21 and Barangay Ginebra against Talk 'N Text is already a record for this conference.

The major increase also put the league on target of attaining its goal to break the league record in both gate receipts and attendance posted during the 1996 season.

"We're very pleased at the way the league has been performing early into the season," said Eala. "Rest assured that we'll continue to give basketball fans more quality games as we enter the year 2007."

PSC releases ₱9M stipend

By June Navarro

THE PHILIPPINE SPORTS COMMISSION yesterday released a total of P8.8 million for the allowances of athletes and coaches.

The amount represented the stipend of 201 national coaches and some 800 athletes from 44 national sports associations, according to PSC executive director Cesar Pradas

The athletes, who are categorized into classes A, B and C, will receive a total of P6 million while the coaches will get P2.8 million as allowances for the month of December.

"We usually give the allowances at the end of every month. But in the spirit of Christmas, the PSC has decided to release it at an earlier date," Pradas told the INQUIRER.

PSC chair William "Butch" Ramirez and Pradas actually signed the release of allowances last Friday but failed to beat the bank's 3 p.m. closing time.

Gold-medal winners in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games the country hosted are bracketed as Class A athletes while silver and bronze medalists fall under class B. Athletes from the developmental pool are categorized as Class C.

Better known as elite athletes, the Class A bets receive a monthly stipend of P8,000 while those in Classes B and C get P6,000 and P4,000, respectively.

There are 120 elite athletes while almost half of the 800 national athletes belong to the developmental pool.

The allowances are on top of the P13.5 million that the government doled out as incentives for medal winners in the just concluded Asian Games in Doha, Qatar.

PHIL out, James in.

RP XI top striker out of Asean Championships

LESS THAN THREE WEEKS BEFORE plunging into action in the Asean Football Championships, the Philippines' bid suffered a major blow as top striker Phil Younghusband has ruled himself out from the biennial competition set in Thailand and Singapore.

The 19-year-old Younghusband, who scored six goals in the Asean qualifying tournament in Bacolod last month, said he has decided to concentrate on his career with Chelsea Football Club in London.

"Unfortunately, I won't be going (to the Asean Championships). I have spoken with Chelsea and they feel it is best I stay here at such an important time during the football season," Younghusband said in an email message to the INQUIRER yesterday.

Younghusband said the first two months of 2007 will be critical to his career with the London-based club, especially because his contract will lapse at the end of the season in May.

"This is the period where decisions will be made about my future. I would have loved to have gone to the Asean Championships," he added.

But Younghusband's older brother, James, will be available for the eight-nation tournament that starts Jan. 12 when the Philippines meets Malaysia at the Supchalasai Stadium in Bangkok.

James will leave England on Jan. 4 to join the team, Phil said.

The Filipinos have been grouped with three-time winners Thailand, Myanmar and Malaysia, while the Singapore group features Vietnam, Indonesia and Laos, the top team in the qualifying stage. *Cedelf P. Tupas, Inquirer Visayas*

Olympic gold search rests on new talents

By June Navarro

THE PHILIPPINE SPORTS COMMISSION WILL soon embark on a talent identification program as cornerstone of its drive to nail a first ever gold in the Olympic Games.

"If you don't have the talent, the country will not win a gold no matter how hard you train," said PSC chair William "Butch" Ramirez yesterday.

Ramirez said the talents will be tapped from several grassroots programs such as the Palarong Pambansa, Mindanao Friendship Games and the POC's Olympic festival.

Polishing the skills of the identified athletes will be the responsibility of the coaches, who should be determined on the basis of their technical know-how of the sport and the capability to prepare a world-class athlete, Ramirez added.

"Do you have a thinking coach who could devote his energies to preparing a world-caliber athlete? Athletes and coaches go hand in hand. You cannot succeed without the other," Ramirez explained.

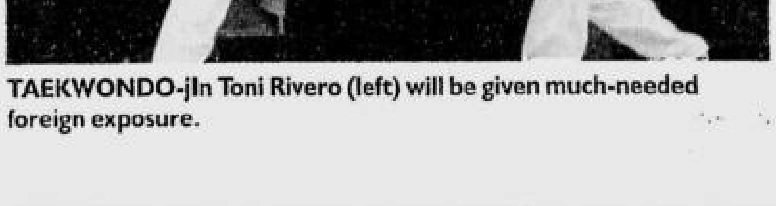
Ramirez also cited the importance of funding to bankroll the foreign exposures, training, nutrition and equipment needed by the athletes and coaches.

Ramirez said support from the sports leaders and the government is also necessary in achieving the Olympic dream.

As for the immediate target of a possible gold in the 2008 Olympics, Ramirez said a lot would depend on First Gentleman Mike Arroyo's promised support for the top athletes who gave the country a 4-6-9 gold-silver-bronze medal haul in the recently concluded Asian Games.

Given enough funding, the archers and taekwondo-jins will be dispatched to South Korea, the divers and fencers to China, the karatekas to Italy and the gymnasts to Russia for at least a year of training.

The boxers, who produced two of the four Asiad golds, will train under a Cuban coach and will see action at several international competitions.



TAEKWONDO-jIn Toni Rivero (left) will be given much-needed foreign exposure.

Real Spicy seeks Philracom Open under Balboa

By Musong R. Castillo

YOUNG AND COURAGEOUS Class A rider Louie Balboa got the call to pilot superhorse Real Spicy in the season-ending Philracom Classic Open Championship this Sunday at the Sta. Ana Park in Makati.

With a total of P3 million on the line and with the finest all-comers in the field, owner Hermie Esguerra has called on Balboa to take the place of Jessie B. Guce, Real Spicy's regular partner who is serving out the final days of a six-week suspension.

Sure to be named the Horse of the Year, Real Spicy will be taking an 11-race winning streak into the Sunday Classic, where he will be ranged for the first time against the likes of super imports Ever Mine Now, La Tienne, Badge of Honor, Glory and Honour and stablemate Wild Orchid.

The four-year-old chestnut son of Real Quiet out of Spicy Tale has been untouched for the year, scoring key victories in the rich First Gentleman Silver Cup, the Gran Copa de Manila and the Presidential Gold Cup just two weeks ago.

"This is the time of year that owners prepare their horses to the fullest," Esguerra told the INQUIRER. "The big races are here and making your horses peak at the right time speaks volumes of how your team does its job.

"Real Spicy is in able hands," added Esguerra, whose foremost rider, Guce, was sacked for foul riding aboard Sexy Eyes during the Marho Festival late in November.

Guce, however, was able to ride Real Spicy in the Philtobo and Gold Cup races because the suspension took place after horse and rider were already declared for said races.

Real Spicy has also obliterated track records in piling up that streak —probably the longest in his class in the modern time—,which also makes Real Spicy the logical choice to be flagged off as the top favorite in the 2,050-meter race.

Balboa also handled Real Spicy in the Silver Cup, where they clocked two-minutes and five seconds for 2,000 meters at the San Lazaro in Carmona, Cavite on May 14.

The best and the brightest chargers have declared participation, with Ever Mine Now and La Tienne running as couple entries like Real Spicy and Wild Orchid and former Presidential Gold Cup winner Empire King and Fairy Queen, an Australian import.

Danseuse (Patti Dilema), Badge of Honor (RM Mamucod) and the Manolito Daquis-steered Glory and Honour round out the field chasing the P1.8 million champion's prize.

Pacman tales

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

PEOPLE FROM Metro Manila who went to General Santos the other weekend to attend the three-in-one celebration of Pinoy boxing icon Manny Pacquiao had some interesting tales to tell.

For starters, I got a lengthy text message from an associate just recently, asking if I heard about the shabby treatment the GMA-7 television crew got from the GenSan host.

"The GMA-7 crew, led by Lala Roque, was barred from covering the house blessing and the birthday concert," he reported. "They only succeeded in taking the video of the christening at the Church of our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage because no one can bar anybody from entering the house of God."

According to my associate, the centerpiece of the buffet table was three huge cakes representing the three occasions. One cake was adorned with a house for the blessing of the Pacquiao mansion, the second with a pair of gloves for Pacman's birthday, while the third had a regular kiddie décor with a fairy tale motif. The last cake represented the baptism of Pacman's daughter Mary Divine Grace.

The festivities lasted until morning, my source reported.

"All night long, Manny kept digging into his pocket for his wallet. He was continually running out of beer. He had to keep sending for more."

***

At the Araneta Coliseum last Christmas Day, a scribe who also covered the GenSan event for television was talking about the celebrities he saw at the church during the christening.

"Among the *ninongs* he recognized were Ramon Ang of San Miguel Corporation, Ilocos Sur governor Chavit Singson, Wilson Tieng of Solar, sportsmen Hermie Esguerra and Ali Atienza, movie stars Rudy Fernandez and Bayani Agbayani and Gabby Lopez of ABS-CBN.

The mansion Pacquiao built is really huge, he said.

"There must have been two or three billiards room."

***

The hangover from the whole-day feast must have been such that Manny was unable to honor several commitments in the next few days.

According to reports, one of these was a function in Boracay hosted by a company whose product he was endorsing. The head of the company, who happens to be his *kumpare* now, definitely did not feel too good about the no-show. So must be the residents of Bicol who eagerly awaited his personal appearance last week for a fundraising event.

***

"It really wasn't a hangover that kept him from honoring his commitments," an advertising man explained.

Manny was just observing a superstitious belief, he said.

"From what I heard, he's supposed to sleep in the new house for five straight days starting from the 16th, otherwise something very bad will happen either to him or to his family. He told us he couldn't leave GenSan in that period, as he apologized to those with whom he had made commitments.

"*Mahirap na daw, kesa masisi pa siya kung magkatutuo ang* superstition, *sundin na lang niya*," my source said.

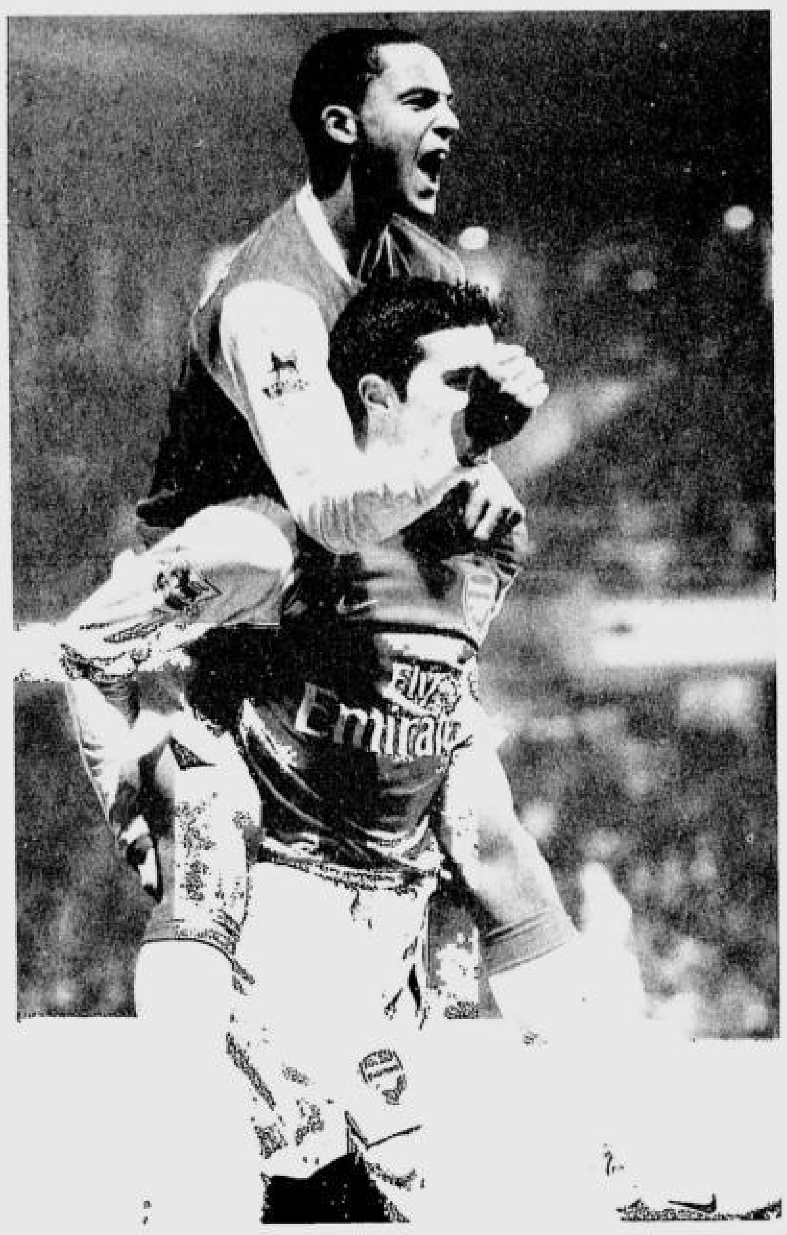
***

Reactions are indeed slow in coming. The Pacquiao celebration is almost two weeks old.

So is this incident which was mentioned by a colleague who called yesterday to wish me a happy new year and at the same time inquire about the status of the BAP which, he speculates, will probably get reinstated after that wild and wooly scene during the last POC board meeting.

"Now that Go Teng Kok has had a falling out with Monico Puentevella and company, maybe the BAP will have the numbers for its reinstatement," he said, after describing rather vaguely, the scenario that transpired: Tennis' Buddy Andrada swinging a fist but missing, (*nakailag ang* target"), GTK throwing a glass of water but also missing his target (*nakailag din*).

"I take it you haven't heard the latest. The BAP's Jinggoy Estrada and the SBP's Manny V. Pangilinan have reached an agreement, thus unifying Philippine basketball. Surely the POC will give its nod to the new alliance," I informed him.



JOY RIDE: Arsenal's Robin Van Persie (right) celebrates with teammate Theo Walcott after scoring during their Premiership match against Watford Tuesday. Arsenal won, 2-1. AFP

Gomez rips GM, remains on top

Individual Standings after round 3:
3.0 points-FM John Paul Gomez (RP), GM Zhao Jun (China), GM Zhang Zhong (China), Li Chao (China), GM Nguyen Ngoc Trong Son (Vietnam), GM Susanto Megaranto (Indonesia) 2.5 points-FM Roderick Nava (RP), GM Zhang Peng Xiang (China), GM Wang Hao (China), GM Wu Wenjin (China), GM Ni Hua (China), Zhou Weigi (China), Shen Siyuan (China), GM Le Quang Liem (Vietnam), IM Tirto (Indonesia)

GOMEZ

FILIPINO FIDE MASTER JOHN PAUL Gomez continued his winning ways by demolishing Grandmaster Shi Long of China to share the lead with five others in the third round of the 2006 Singapore Masters International and Challengers yesterday at the Asean Chess Academy in Singapore.

The 20-year-old Gomez has 3 points like his fourth-round opponent GM Zhao Jun (China), GM Zhang Zhong (China), Li Chao (China), GM Nguyen Ngoc Trong Son (Vietnam) and GM Susanto Megaranto (Indonesia).

Gomez had upset GM GM Wang Rui (2463) of China in the first round then beat FM Graham Chua Xing-Jian of Singapore in the second round late Tuesday.

Filipino FM Roderick Nava (bested GM Nguyen Anh Dung of Vietnam to notch 2.5 points in the company of top seed GM Zhang Peng Xiang (China), GM Wang Hao (China), GM Wu Wenjin (China), GM Ni Hua (China), Zhou Weigi (China), Shen Siyuan (China), GM Le Quang Liem (Vietnam) and IM Tirto (Indonesia).

Nava drew with compatriot IM Ronald Dableo then subdued Pan Qin of China in the first two rounds.

National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) president and Surigao del Sur representative Prospero "Butch" Pichay Jr. said he's happy with the impressive showing of Gomez and Nava. "I hope they get their GM results," said Pichay, who bankrolled the trip of the RP chess team here.

IM Wesley So, the 13-year-old national champion, bounced back in contention by crushing WFM Pham Le Thao Nguyen of Vietnam to raise his total to 2.0 points.

In the Open section, GM Zhao Jun (China) beat IM Enrique Paciencia, GM Ni Hua (China) waylaid IM Yves Ranola, FM Anthony Makinano lost to GM Wu Shao Bin (Singapore), NM Eric Gloria beat countryman IM Ronald Dableo, IM Chito Garma yielded to WIM Zhang Jilin (China), Dr. Alfredo Paez lost to FM Wu Xibin (China), IM Luis Chiong IV toppled Nuebronner Jarred (Singapore), and Shanmugam Ravin (Singapore) bowed to FM Julio Catalino Saddora.

Meanwhile, it was IM Garma, not GM Mark Paragua, who bowed to GM Zhang Zhong in the first round on Tuesday. Paragua begged of at the last minute. *Marlon Bernardino, contributor*

NSBC regional elims kick off 2007 BAP calendar

THE 61ST NATIONAL STUDENTS BASketball Championship (NSBC) regional eliminations will start early next month, Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP) secretary general Graham C. Lim announced yesterday.

Also known as the National Inter-Secondary Championship and National Inter-Collegiate Championship, the national finals of the NSBC will be held Feb. 27-March 5 with Negros Oriental Gov. George P. Arnaiz as host.

The championship in the collegiate men's, women's and high school, usually held in separate venues in the past, will all be held at the Lamberto Macias Stadium in Dumaguete City.

The defending champions are West Negros College (men), Philippine Christian U (high school) and AMA Cumputer University (women).

The top three in the men's division will qualify to the 5th Asian University Basketball Championship (AUBC) to be held April 16-23 in Daet, Camarines Norte, under the sponsorship of Gov. Jesus Typoco.

Dr. Abundio Palencia of the BAP regional office and Daet Councilor Julain Lavadia are handling the arrangements for the AUBC which was staged last in Dumaguete City in 2005 with Myong Ji University of Korea beating West Negros College in the finals.

Meanwhile, the 5th National Convention will be held in Batangas City Feb. 8-11 with participants coming from different regional offices. The last convention was held in 2005 in Dumaguete City.

The 2007 BAP calendar of events:

January—Regional Elimination of the 61st National Students Basketball

Championship (NSBC); 18th FIBA Asia Junior Women Championship in Bangkok, Thailand Jan. 29-Feb. 5; Referees and Coaches Clinics.

February—5th National Convention (Feb. 8-11)in Batangas City; National Finals of the 61st National Students Basketball Championship (Feb. 27-March 5) Dumaguete City; National Congress (after the opening of 61st

National Students Championship).

March—National Basketball League (NBL) Championship; Seaba Champions Cup; Referees and Coaches Clinic in different Regions.

April—National Mini-Basketball Championship organized by National Mini- Basketball Athletic Association (NMBAA); 5th Asian University Basketball Championship in Daet City, Camarines Norte; 5th Sen. Ambrosio Padilla Memorial Cup Championship; Seaba Men's Championship (Qualifying to Fiba Asia); Seaba Women's Championship (Qualifying to Fiba Asia)

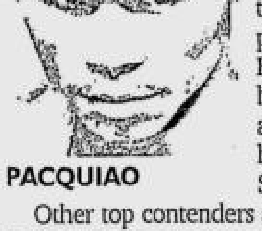
Americans testing Pacquiao

TOP AMERICAN BREEDERS LARRY WHITEhead, Joe Wolcott, Tom Cooper, Eddie Odell, Day Gray, and Jeff Hudspeth say they are among Filipino boxing icon Manny Pacquiao's biggest fans.

Fact is, they will have their pictures taken with Pacquiao during the National Cockers' Association (NCA) World Championship Derby slated Jan. 9, 11 and 13 at the Pasay City Cockpit.

The Americans said however that they will set their admiration aside and try to beat Pacquiao, also among the big names in local cockfighting, for the NCA championship.

Wolcott, who on Dec. 16 and 17, 2006, ruled the Sunset Recreation Club Derby in Louisiana, USA, with a score of 7-1, said he will not rest until he captures the NCA title.



PACQUIAO

Apart from the Americans, Pacquiao will also have to contend with the bigwigs of Philippine cockfighting like Eddie Araneta and his brother Bobby Araneta and Patrick Antonio and his American guest Joe Sanford.

Other top contenders are the brother team of Raffy and Mauro Prieto, Ramon Revilla, Rep. Iggy Arroyo, Manolo Lopez, Gov. Ito Ynares, Sec. Ronnie Puno, Jun Santiago, Edwin Abella, Boy Jiao, Rudy Albano, Pico Berin, Efren Canlas, Mario Villamor, Jun and Rudy Jingco, Jet Fernando, Madlambayan Brothers and Art Sevilla.

World Slasher begins Jan. 16

A FORMIDABLE GROUP OF UNITED STATES-based master breeders is determined to grab championship honors in the World Slasher Cup Invitational 8-Cock Derby set on Jan. 16, 18 and 20 at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Pintakasi of Champions, host of the biannual event, announced that Filipino cockers and defending champions Nene Abello/Willy Villarica, Dicky Lim, Joel Fernando and Philip Chiongbian will have their hands full against the invading cockers from the United States.

Heading the American contingent is Roger Roberts of Georgia, the 2001 World Slasher Cup Champion. With him are Tom Cooper of North Carolina, Bobby Fairchild of Oklahoma, Kyle and Bel Manatt of Arkansas, James Jones of Kentucky, Johnny Philips of Georgia, Joe Stanfield of California, Richard Lainier of Florida, Joey Melendres of Australia, Speedy Gonzales and Dr. Toti Morales of California, Roy and Farley of Canada, Benny Costes and Edwin Peñamante of Illinois, Goi Goitia of California and Eric Ong of Hawaii.

John Hay Chairman's Cup up

BAGUIO CITY—THE EIGHTH CHAIRMAN'S Cup tees off today at the Camp John Hay Golf Club course here.

The annual event has attracted a field of more than 250 members and guests, led by club chair Robert John L. Sobrepeña, who will be vying for top honors in the two-day event.

Sobrepeña is expected to be in the VIP flight made up of former President Fidel V. Ramos, Baguio City Rep. Mauricio Domogan, acting Baguio Mayor Peter Rey Bautista and National Golf Association of the Philippines (NGAP) president Leandro Mendoza.

The year-ending tournament will use the 18-hole, medal play format. Participants will be divided into five divisions according to their handicap indices. Raffle prizes are also at stake during the closing ceremony on Friday.

SPORTSWATCH

Checkmate team eliminations

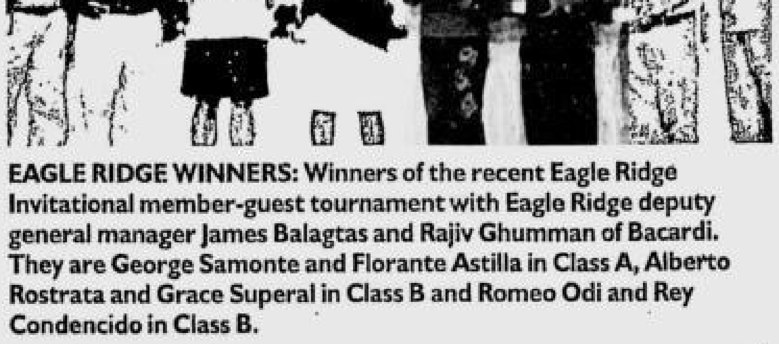
THE FIRST OF THE TWO ELIMINATION LEGS IN THE SELECTION OF THE MEMbers of the 2007 US and Asia-bound Milo Checkmate team gets under way at 10 a.m. tomorrow at the lower 2F of St. Francis Square behind SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City. Qualified to join are the 2006 enrollees of the Milo Checkmate clinic who have taken up at least two series in the same year. The event will employ the round-robin system and 90 minutes time control play-to-finish in selecting the first group of finalists in the following categories: 8-under; 10-under; 12-under and juniors (13-17 years old). For details, call 826-8560 and 0916-852-1069.

GCAP cockfest at San Juan today

THE CROWD-DRAWING COCKFIGHT SERIES OF THE GENTLEMEN COCKERS Association of the Philippines (GCAP) starts today at San Juan Coliseum via the big-time 5-cock derby featuring over 70 fights. Participants are expected to field their winningest gamebirds today to gain the early lead in the GCAP Cocker of the Year race. GCAP members include Louie Cua, Otto Balboa, Max and Bebot Roxas, Jack Yap, Vice Gov. Boyet Joson, Pol Estrellado, Totoy Haruta, Romy Castro, Pepito Ngo, Boy de Roca, Gerry Ramos, Rudy Albano, sabong idol Patrick Antonio, Eric dela Rosa, Jet and Joel Fernando, Jingco Brothers, Madlambayan Brothers, Rey Briones, Rep. Butch Pichay, Bubot Booc, Ricky Valencia, Tony Marfori, Mayor Buddy Dunca and Butch Nunez. For inquiries, call 725-5369 and 725-6563.

Fastest Win event at Las Piñas

A NEW HACKFIGHT FORMAT DRAWING THE ATTENTION OF SMALL-TIME cockers, dubbed the Fastest Win One-Cock Timbangan, will be staged today at Las Piñas Coliseum with over 200 participants. Registration starts at 7 a.m. until 10 a.m. Fights start at 11 a.m., said host Monching Ignacio of Cavite. The fastest win champion will be selected after every 10 fights and will receive P20,000; second, P10,000. Meanwhile, a formidable lineup of *sabong* champions collides at LPC this Saturday, Dec. 30, via the New Year 4-cock derby which offers P500,000 in prizes. Call 873-1040 and 874-3910 or 0926 -7450375 (Julius).



EAGLE RIDGE WINNERS: Winners of the recent Eagle Ridge Invitational member-guest tournament with Eagle Ridge deputy general manager James Balagtas and Rajiv Ghumman of Bacardi. They are George Samonte and Florante Astilla in Class A, Alberto Rostrata and Grace Superal in Class B and Romeo Odi and Rey Condencido in Class B.

Gasol tries to get back into shape

WASHINGTON—MEMPHIS GRIZZLIES coach Mike Fratello is pleading for patience while All-Star forward Pau Gasol works his way back into shape.

Gasol, who broke his foot playing for Spain in the world championships last summer, has featured in only seven games for the downtrodden Grizzlies since returning to the line-up.

"Obviously, we're happy to have him back," Fratello told Reuters in an interview. "But in fairness, the young man can't be out for four months and suddenly return to what everybody else has been doing.

"You just can't be in the same shape as they are. So everyone needs to be patient. He'll work his way back in it."

Gasol has averaged 14 points since returning to the injury-riddled Grizzlies, who sits in the Southwest Division basement with a 6-23 record.

The seven-foot, 260-pound Gasol, a deft shooter with soft hands, has displayed flashes of brilliance since his return. He scored a season-high 28 against New Orleans in 28 minutes of play last Friday.

All-Star form

But the 26-year-old estimated he needs at least another week until his conditioning returns to All-Star form.

He scored 13 points against the Washington Wizards on Tuesday in 23 minutes, shooting five of nine from the floor.

Memphis lost the game 116-101, however, their 15th road loss in 17 games.

"I'm pretty comfortable with the minutes I'm playing," Gasol said in the Grizzlies locker room. "It was hard the first few games. I'm pretty happy with the shape I'm in right now.

"We played six games in nine nights. The first few games, I was still fighting back just to get back on the floor. By the last game, obviously my body didn't feel like it did the first few games.

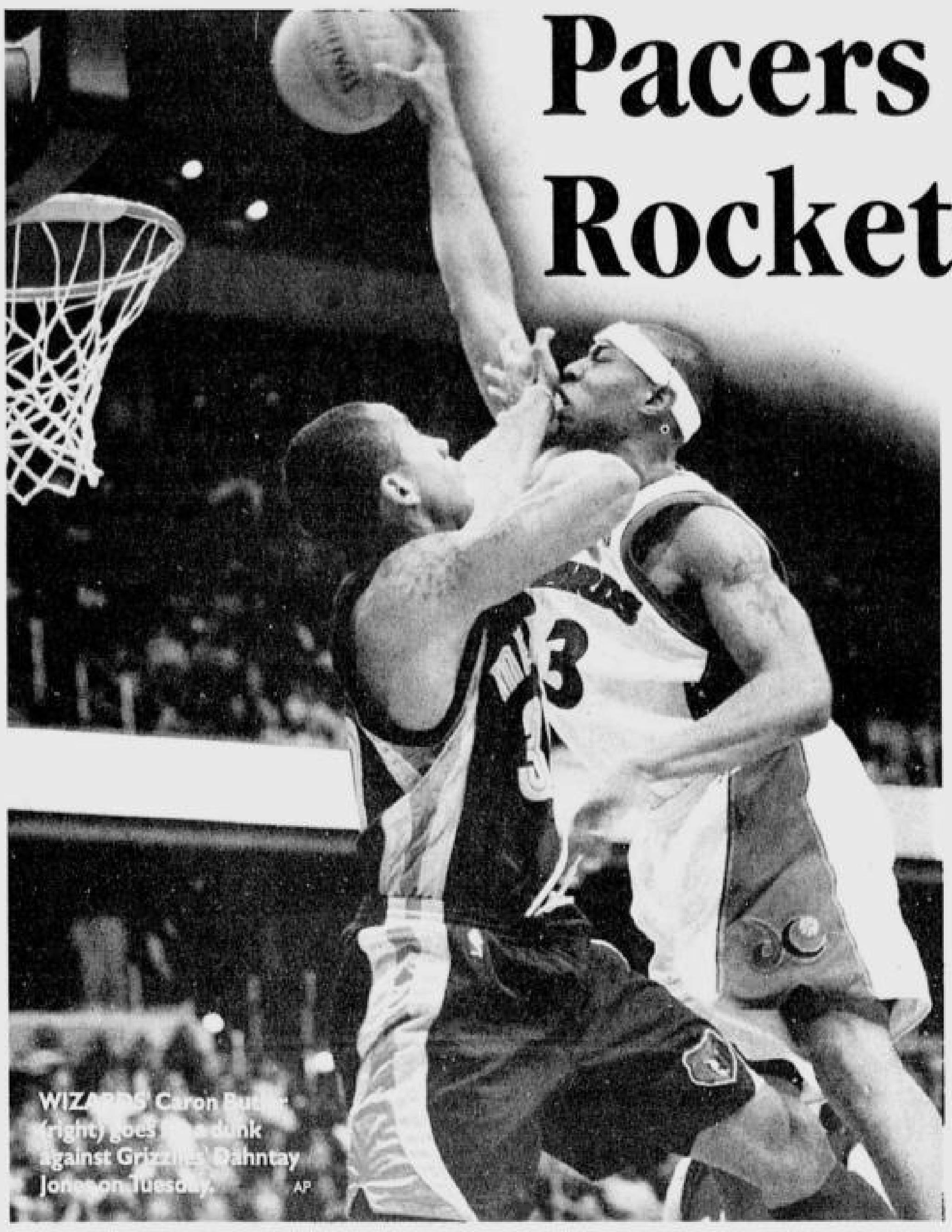
"But I'm happy to be back. Happy to be healthy. That's the bottom line."

Not even Gasol's return to the court is likely to end the nightmare season for Memphis, which finished third in the Southwest Division a year ago with a 49-33 record.

Perhaps the lone bright spot for the Grizzles is forward Mike Miller, the only player in the NBA leading his team in scoring, rebounding and assists.

Gasol, who averaged 20 points a game last year for the Grizzlies and was the MVP in the world championships, is not about to quit even if Memphis has lost 10 of its last 11.

"Injuries obviously have not helped us at all," said Gasol. "It's frustrating and a little disappointing. But it's up to us to turn it around. *Reuters*


WIZARDS' Caron Butler (right) goes for a dunk against Grizzlies' Dahntay Jones on Tuesday. AP

Pacers shoot down Rockets; AI shines

NEW YORK—THE INDIANA Pacers put in a strong defensive performance to grind out an 81-76 home victory over the Houston Rockets, who welcomed back Tracy McGrady from a seven-game layoff due to a sore back.

Tuesday's defeat was Houston's third in four games and a rusty McGrady offset a team-high 19 points with several costly turnovers as the Rockets struggled without injured Chinese center Yao Ming.

"I was fatigued down the stretch," McGrady said on the Rockets Web site. "I was nervous going into tonight's game wondering whether or not the injury was going to flare up.

"But right now, I feel just fatigued. When I get into game shape that will help me get rid of some of those turnovers like I had at the end.

"I pretty much cost us this game tonight." Houston will need McGrady to return to his all-star form if the Rockets are to overcome the absence of Yao, who is expected to be out for six weeks after fracturing a bone in his right knee against the Los Angeles Clippers on Saturday.

The Pacers, who were missing their leading scorer and rebounder Jermaine O'Neal due to the flu, were led by a 23-point, 14-rebound effort from Al Harrington while Jamaal Tinsley chipped in with 17 points.

Jeff Foster had just one point but was a menace on the boards for the Pacers, pulling down 16 rebounds.

Even without Yao and McGrady operating at less than full fitness, the Rockets had a chance to pull out a win after they cut the Pacers lead to 78-76 with 16 seconds to play.

Meanwhile, Allen Iverson celebrated his first win in a Nuggets jersey collecting the double-double with 28 points and 13 assists as Denver topped the Boston Celtics 116-105.

Shawn Marion hit for 23 points and Leandro Barbosa added 22 as the Suns quickly returned to their winning ways, dumping the Portland Trail Blazers, 110-87, in Phoenix. *Reuters*

COMPLETE RESULTS: Washington 116, Memphis 101; Indiana 81, Houston 76; Detroit 92, New Jersey 91; Milwaukee 114, San Antonio 107; Minnesota 100, Chicago 98; Dallas 97, Charlotte 84; Denver 116, Boston 105; Utah 102, LA Clippers 92; Phoenix 110, Portland 87; Seattle 102, N.O./Oklahoma City 94; Golden State 116, Philadelphia 97

NBA aims to invade India cage market

NEW DELHI—THE NBA HAS LAUNCHED an ambitious bid to make basketball India's most popular sport after cricket, the country's overriding passion.

The US National Basketball Association (NBA) will help organise a series of high-profile tournaments and training camps with the aim of achieving its goal within 10 years.

The NBA believes there is a "tremendous scope" for basketball in India where it could soon overtake hockey, the number two sport.

"We have been studying the potential of basketball in India for about three years now," Mark Aronson, vice president of NBA Entertainment's Events and Attractions Group, told AFP on a recent visit.

"There is tremendous scope, and contrary to what we had thought, basketball already has a presence at the grassroot level." Basketball is played in schools all over the country but few pursue it thereafter like cricket or hockey.

Cricket is a religion

"We know cricket is a religion here but the rise of another team game is definitely a possibility," said Aronson.

His visit coincided with Indian hockey hitting a new low in Doha by failing to win a medal for the first time in Asian Games history.

"There is a definite vacuum after cricket, and basketball has all the trappings of an exciting game," said Aronson. "We are eyeing the number two spot in terms of popularity.

"We have given ourselves 10 years to make a mark in the country. We went to some small towns and realized there were people who loved the game.

"That has given us a lot of hope." Indian basketball had its moments in the 1970s when the national team finished fourth in the Asian men's championships in 1975 and also qualified for the 1980 Moscow Olympics.

Asian games

Now India does not even qualify for the Asian Games but officials are confident a push from the NBA will revive the sport.

"Any association with the NBA will help us get mileage," said Harish Sharma, secretary-general of the Basketball Federation of India.

"We are seeking their help to improve our infrastructure and coaching standards.

"The game has to be presented in a very big and attractive way. There is tremendous scope but a lot of effort has to be made for that." Sharma has ambitions of making India the basketball capital of Asia.

"We want to hold international events and also promote the concept of 'basketball without borders' where Asian teams can come here to train and play matches in India.

"We will rope in celebrities to attract television audiences." Sharma was confident the NBA can work wonders in India even though concrete plans had yet to be worked out.

"In America, the game was taken to the grassroots and the same needs to be done here," he said. "It will take time but it will happen.

"India will become a basketball-crazy nation one day." *AFP*

Ochoa handily snares Female Athlete award

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA—LORENA Ochoa learned at an early age to aim high and not be afraid to fail.

She was 12 when she trained six months to climb the snow-covered top of Pico de Orizaba, Mexico's tallest mountain at 18,405 feet. When she was 5, Ochoa fell some 15 feet from a tree and broke both wrists, leaving her in a cast from her shoulders to her fingers.

"They said the doctor gave me magical wrists, some magic in my hand," Ochoa said.

Those hands delivered sheer magic on the golf course in 2006 when the 24-year-old Mexican overcame past failures to win six times and end Annika Sorenstam's five-year reign as the best player on the LPGA Tour.

Ochoa swept all the major honors on the LPGA and picked up another award at the end of the season with a landslide victory as the AP Female Athlete of the Year.

"That was my goal in January, just to be the best player on the tour," she said recently. "I always knew I could do it. I think I've been raising my level of golf, and also more mature now inside the golf course and outside, too. It helps."

She received 220 points in voting from sports editors around the country, double the point total of French tennis player Amelie Mauresmo, who captured Wimbledon and the Australian Open.

Tiger Woods was voted AP Male Athlete of the Year, the first time since 1993 that the male and female athletes came from the same sport (Michael Jordan-Sheryl Swoopes in basketball). And it was the first time since Babe Zaharias and Byron Nelson in 1945 that golfers swept the AP athlete awards.

Maria Sharapova, who won the U.S. Open in tennis, and Lisa Leslie, who won her third MVP award in the WNBA, tied for third with 60 points. Rounding out the top five were French Open champion Justin Henin-Hardenne and Hannah Teter, a snowboarding gold medalist at the Turin Olympics.

Ochoa has a passion for outdoor adventures, such as mountain climbing, and she brings a fearless attitude to golf. She has emerged as one of the most dynamic players, going after the flag every chance she gets.

It was the fourth straight year a golfer has won AP Female Athlete. Sorenstam won the award the previous three years.

There was no inkling that stardom would shift in women's golf when Sorenstam went to Ochoa's home turf and won her first start of the year at the MasterCard Classic in Mexico.

And there was no indication Ochoa had learned from her past failures at the first LPGA major of the year at the Kraft Nabisco, when she lost a three-shot lead in the final round. But she showed her fight that afternoon, hitting a 5-wood over the water to 6 feet on the final hole for an eagle to force a playoff.

Karrie Webb won on the first extra hole, but simply getting into a playoff sent Ochoa soaring. She went wire to wire in her next start to win the Takefugi Classic in Las Vegas. The next two months, she finished first or second in six tournaments.

Ochoa poured it on at the end of the year. She won for the first time before her home crowd in Mexico, then seized control of the points-based LPGA player of the year award with a momentous duel in the desert against Sorenstam in the Samsung World Championship. The Swede had a three-shot lead going into the final round, but Ochoa fired at flags and closed with a 65 to win by two.

Nash named Canada's top sportsman

STEVE NASH

TORONTO—PHOENIX Suns point guard Steve Nash, the NBA MVP for the last two seasons, was honored as Canada's male athlete of the year on Tuesday.

He received The Lionel Conacher Award as the top vote-getter in a survey by The Canadian Press and Broadcast News. Nash beat out fellow MVPs Justin Morneau of baseball's Minnesota Twins and Joe Thornton of ice hockey's San Jose Sharks in balloting of sports editors and broadcasters across Canada.

"It's incredible, I suppose," Nash said. "Somehow I believe though that they just pulled my name from a hat because there's no way I'm more deserving than those guys. I imagine it was just the luck of the draw."

Nash, who is from Victoria, British Columbia, also won this award in 2002 and 2005.

MULTIMILLIONAIRE: Japanese pitcher Daisuke Matsuzaka, wearing his Red Sox uniform, appears in a commercial for "Asahi Super Dry" beer in Tokyo Tuesday. Matsuzaka joined the Red Sox Dec. 14 on a six-year, $52-million contract. AP

6 sailors hurt as Sydney–Hobart race starts

SYDNEY—THE SYDNEY TO HOBART yacht race lived up to its reputation as one of the world's most gruelling bluewater classics Wednesday, when eight boats were forced out after falling victim to rough weather.

Rescue helicopters and police launches worked overtime to help stricken crew members in scenes that evoked memories of the disastrous 1998 race, when eight sailors died in massive swells.

Six sailors were injured, three seriously, when a wind gust sheared off the mast of New Zealand contender Maximus, sending it crashing into crew members on the deck below.

Dutch boat ABN Amro One also lost its mast, although the crew escaped injury.

The three most seriously hurt on Maximus were winched off the 30-meter (100-foot) yacht by helicopter and airlifted to hospital with head, chest, back, leg and pelvis injuries. Another two were taken off via a police launch.

Sydney Morning Herald photographer Dallas Kilponen was aboard Maximus and said he heard a "terrifying" crack as the carbon fibre mast snapped.

"It's a huge mast so it was pretty full-on, there's blood all through the cockpit and just bits of carbon fibre everywhere," Kilponen told the newspaper's website.

"Everyone's a bit shocked, a bit shattered. At the end of the day we're bloody lucky nobody was seriously injured or even killed." Emergency services also scrambled two helicopters to rescue eight sailors from the yacht Koomooloo after it began sinking off the New South Wales coast.

But British yacht Adventure managed to pick up the sailors before the vintage yacht, which won the race in 1968, disappeared beneath the waves.

Sky News reported another sailor, the skipper of the yacht Illusion, was airlifted to hospital suffering broken ribs, while the boat continued to race.

A total of eight boats retired from the 78-strong fleet, which set off in perfect conditions in Sydney Harbour on Tuesday.

The Cruising Yacht Club of Australia, which runs the event, played down comparisons with the 1998 race.

"It's just a tough race (but) they're certainly not '98 conditions," yacht club commodore Geoff Lavis told Sky News.

"We've got the situation under control as much as we can. We have emergency management plans, we have procedures to follow in these situations.

"It's not pleasant, but it's under control from our point of view." Lavis said it appeared equipment failures were behind the mast breakages of the highly-fancied Maximus and ABN Amro.

The dismastings left favorite supermaxi Wild Oats in the lead of the 628-nautical-mile race down Australia's east coast, followed by Skandia. Both the Maximus and ABN Amro One were heading back to port.

Organisers said the other yachts forced out were Endorfin, Sailors with Disabilities, Living Doll, Mr. Kite and Chutzpah. Lavis said a southerly change was expected late Wednesday that could again make conditions difficult for the depleted fleet. *AFP*

SPORTS

Aguilar, son Nat'l Riders of the Year

UNDOUBTEDLY, GLENN AGUILAR IS THE Philippines' greatest motocross rider ever.

In 2006, Aguilar of Caltex Revtex-KTM-2GO brushed aside everyone that stood in his path and made all the pretenders to his throne eat dust en route to an unprecedented 10th National Rider of the Year crown for both pro 125cc and open class, or a total of 20 championships in a decade.

This season, though, Aguilar achieved the feat with a twist—he did it with his son McLean winning also his 2nd championship, in his own category. McLean was also the Peewee champ in 2005.

Glenn and McLean officially crowned themselves as National Riders of the Year in their respective divisions in the Camel Supercross International Championship Series 2006, which became another veritable playground for the father-and-son tandem.

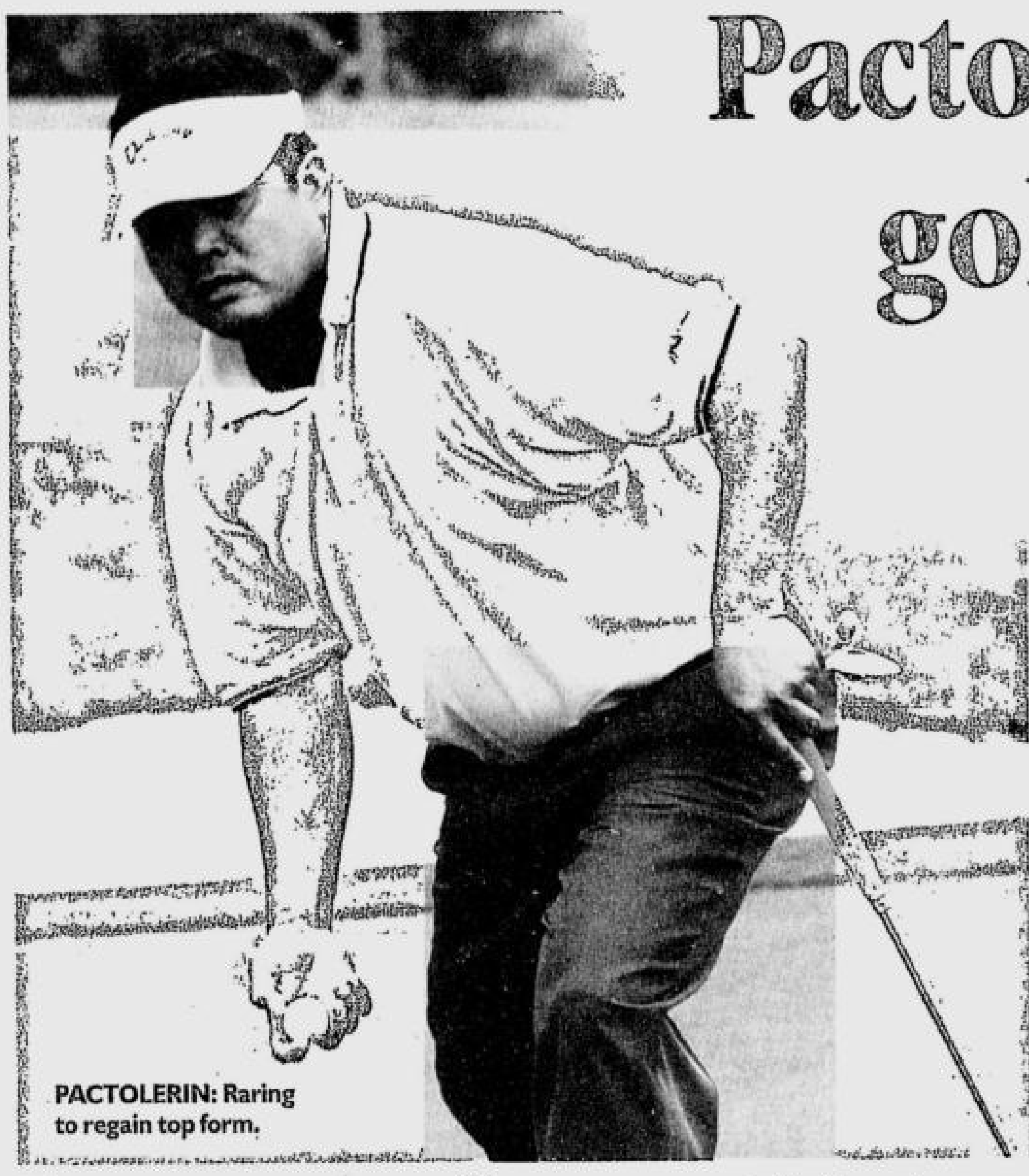
Aguilar, who is still the first and only Filipino to have joined the FIM world championships in Europe and have won the prestigious FIM Asia-Pacific Motocross Championship, topped the last leg of a 6-part national series with a huge lead to capture his 10th national title before 20,000 screaming fans at the Sta. Barbara racetrack.

The motocross superstar, who is backed by Bridgestone, Oakley, Sidi, Renthal, HJC Helmets, Alpine Stars, Fox and Flamboyant Construction, dominated three of the four heats in the Camel pro open and pro 125 categories to wrap up the overall title.

"Winning an unprecedented 10th national title is something that I will will cherish for the rest of my life," said Aguilar. "It has been a tough year for me, but the most important thing is to still come out on top at the end of the season."

His 7-year-old son McLean, from De La Salle-Zobel, made it a double celebration when he topped the Peewee 7-years-old-and below division pulling away.

GLENN and his son McLean bonding before the race.



PACTOLERIN: Raring to regain top form.

Pacto leads Kukgi golf field today

By Musong R. Castillo

FORMER PHILIPPINE OPEN winner Robert Pactolerin leads a lean 63-man field vying for the P100,000 top prize in the Kukgi Environmental Invitational that tees off today at the short but tight Camp Aguinaldo layout.

The 44-year-old Pactolerin, a short game wizard who won the RP Open in 1990 at Villamor, is touted as one of the players to watch in the P750,000 event along with Omega Invitational champion Mars Pucay.

Pactolerin and Pucay, ironically, figured in a marathon eight-hole playoff for the Omega title earlier in the year, which Pucay ended with a birdie from the fringe at Wack Wack east's ninth hole.

The tournament, which is being bankrolled by Kukgi executives Young Soo-kim, Hyun Hoo-yang and Chan Woo-yang and supported by Camp Aguinaldo GM Reynaldo Ochosa, is the season-ending offering of the Professional Golfers Association of the Philippines and its president Jun Bustamante for the country's tournament-deprived pros.

Also in the field are veterans Eddie Bagtas, Rodolfo Cuello, Felix Fernando, Juanito Pagunsan, Ruben Sasutil, Benjie Magada and Asian Tour veteran Rey Pagunsan and noted coach Jun Cedo.

Pactolerin, Pucay and Pagunsan are among the busier pros in the roster, getting invites from almost all local tournaments, including the rich The Country Club Invitational.

So paces RP Open elims

HANSON SO JR. BIRDIED NO. 17 on the way to a one-under-par 71 yesterday as he led the chase for 10 qualifying spots in the 2007 Philippine Open Golf Championship set Jan. 11-14 at Wack Wack's east course.

The two-day, 36-hole qualifier intends to fill up the RP Open roster, which includes the top 40 players in the land and the best players in the region led by defending champion Scott Strange of Australia.

Carito Villaroman shot a 72 with amateur Louie Dacudao while Cassius Casas, winner of the all-Filipino RP Open in 2001, wound up with a 79 in a tie with Marlon Dizon, who also had a 39-40 card, and amateur Marcel Puyat (41-38) for 11th place.

Ilagan scores albatross at Masters

MARTY ILAGAN SCORED A RARE DOUBLE-EAGLE on the 18th hole of the Masters course of the Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club last Dec. 13. Ilagan, captain of the Southwoods team which captured the Federation Golf League recently and a former national tennis player, holed a 168-yard second shot on the par-5 hole with a Bridgestone 6-iron and a Titleist Prov-V1 ball. He was playing with Southwoods teammates Ferdie Agustin and Mike Abiera when he made the rare shot also known as the "albatross." Ilagan also had scored two holes-in-one at Southwoods.

Birel drivers excel in Asian Karting

AN IMPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE IN the recent Asian Karting Open Championship indicates that Birel Motorsports is right on track in its goal to develop Filipino world-class karters.

Aside from Marlon Stockinger who bagged the overall Asian Karting plum, Birel drivers Bobby Domingo and Ivan Carapiet likewise caught the respect of Asian and visiting European and American competitors in the final leg of the event held at the Kartodromo Race Circuit in Macau.

Though it was his first international event, Domingo was able to qualify 22nd out of 34 drivers in the Rotax Max Junior class. What further impressed the huge crowd was his big rally in the final race that enabled him to finish eighth.

Carapiet, the champion of the AKOC Philippine leg last June, made it in the top 15 out of 63 drivers in the qualifying round of the Rotax Max Seniors class and checked in third in the Pre-Final Race.

He finished fifth in the final race, which was enough to capture the Overall First Runner-up honors. But what really made Carapiet a bigger sensation was his feat of posting the fastest lap time of 49.98 seconds – the best time for the whole weekend.

Stockinger, together with fellow Formula 125 Open Junior Class drivers Daniel Cleak and Indy Villalon also finished among the top 15 drivers in the qualifying round. Stockinger then climbed his way to 3rd place during the Pre-Final Race, allowing him to capture Overall Champion in the AKOC Formula 125 Open. In the final race, the three Filipinos got caught up in a major crash, causing them to retire from the race.

"Our qualifying results prove that the Filipino Karter has the speed and the skill to go up against other international competitors," said Martin Alvendia, team manager of Birle Motorposts. "Macau is truly a nice track and we hope to come back here next year to further move up in the race standings."

IVAN Carapiet raises the Philippine flag with Mark Bumgarner as he took overall runner-up honors in the Rotax Max Seniors Class of the 2006 Asian Karting Open Championship.

THE BIGGEST DANCE EVENT THIS SEASON!

SHALL WE DANCE Christmas with the ABC Christmas iba!

ClickTheCity.com

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE Thursday December 28 2006

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5	Nickelodeon				TNA Wrestling		Metro		Big News	S.O.S		Hayop Na Hayop		Wow Maling-Mali Bytes	Sentro	The Best Of Dokyu		Araw-Araw Prem-yo Sa Pasko	Simbang Gabi
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Inocente Do Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Bart The Vandal Buster	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World		Kapamilya Deal Or No Deal	Super Inggo (8:15 PM)		Maging Sino Ka Man	Princess Hours		Bandila	SOCO	Mirada De Mujer
AXN		CSI: Miami (Season 4)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 6)		Sports Disaster IV		Ripley's Believe It or Not		The 4400 (Season 2)		Fear Factor (Season V)		The Amazing Race Asia		Alias (Season V)		Lost (Season II)	
bTV	B-Ballography: O.Robertson	TV Shopping		NBA: TWolves @ Raptors					Pac 10				NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	NBA: TWolves @ Raptors				
Cartoon Network																	Aqua Teen Hunger Force		
Cinema One		Himala				Sambahin Ang Ngalan Mo				Dreamboy				Pedro Penduko 2				Shake, Rattle & Roll 2K5	
Cinemax		Big Bravo (2:55 PM)					Witch Hunt (5:20 PM)			The Shadow				Cerberus				Dog Park	
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	News Asia Global Challenges/ Inside Mirror East [illegible] Traveller Global Office Global Challenges	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		Revelations		Law and Order: Special Victims Unit + 24		Profiler		Investigative Reports		Law and Order		Law and Order: Special Victims Unit + 24		Bones		Threshold		E-Ring	
Discovery Channel		Psychic Witness		Man Made Marvels		More Than Human		Deadliest Catch		Extreme Machines		One Step Beyond	Connect	Mythbusters		Man Made Marvels		Power Zone	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Un-[illegible] Bunny	Shuriken School	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Monster Allergy	Shuriken School	Buzz On Maggie	Totally Spies	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		Watersports Programming Hot Water		Asian Cup Table Tennis '06				English Premier Football League				Ten Seasons: A Decade of Great		Sportscenter Asia	Pro Billiards '06		Pro Billiards '06		Sportscenter Asia
ETC		Beach Girls		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Will & Grace	Friends	Simple Life 4	Rated Oh! 6	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr. Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen DeGeneres Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	Nanny 911		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Makita Ka Lang Muli	Kapuso Movie Festival				Ghost Fighter	Jewel In The Palace		24 Oras	Captain Barbell	Atlantika	StarStruck: The Next Level	Bakekang	A Rosy Life (9:15 PM)		Magpakailanman		Saksi	100% Pinoy
Hallmark Channel				Judging Amy/[illegible] 20,000 Leagues Under The Sea		McLeod's Daughters		Strong Medicine		Family Law		Spooks		Way In The Blood		Regenesis			
HBO			Omega Doom			Mad City				Son Of The Mask				Lean On Me				I Still Know What You Did Last Summer	
Hero TV	Megaman	Sunny Pig	Inuyasha III	Mirmo de Pon	Saiyuki Reload	Naruto	Monkey Turn	Gundam Seed Destiny	Full Metal Panic	Galaxy Angels	Voltes V Evolution	Inuyasha III	Mirmo de Pon	Astroboy	Three-Eyed One	Naruto	AmDriver	Megaman	Yu-Gi-Oh GX
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		EBC Earth Files		Japan Video Topics/ Arris		Travel Philippines	Japan Video Topics/ Arris	EBC Earth Files	IBC News Tonite	Metroball Show	
JackTV		Smackdown				X-Men	The Batman	Experience		Mad TV		Just For Laughs	Scare Tactics	Distraction	Banzai	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Premium Blend	The Late Show David Letterman	
Lifestyle Network	Get Color	Wolfgang Puck	Inside Dish	Rachel Ray		Sensible Chic	At Home With	Barefoot Contessa	Everyday Italian	Martha		Look For Less	Good Finds	Rachel Ray		E! True Hollywood Story		Your Private Island	Genuine Article
MTV Philippines		Handpicked Kyan	VH1 All Access: Awesomely Bad Freakouts		Punk'd	The Hills	MTV Hits		Rockista on MTV	Get Spotted	Ultrasound Kyan	TRL		Punk'd	The Hills	Bamo 19	Sessions Kyan	VH1 All Access: Britney's Most Shocking Moments	
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX News	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		MYX Presents		MYX Bandarito	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXlog
National Geographic	Monkey Business	Nat'l Geographic Specials						Top 5		Nat'l Geographic Specials		WOW!							
NBN					Dyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Siya?	Teledyaryo W/ Rio Lanot & Angelique Lazo		Tinig Ng Bayan		Equilibrium		Teledyaryo Final Edition		World Pool Championship					
Net 25	INC Chronicles (Filipino)	In Focus	Euromaxx	INC Chronicles (English)	INC Chronicles (Filipino)	Ang Tamang Daan		News Beat (Live)		OpenLine Live	Gabay Sa Kalusugan	INC Chronicles (English)	INC Chronicles (Filipino)	Ang Pagbubunyag		World Report	In Focus	DWTV Journal News	Euromaxx
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	The Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	SpongeBob SquarePants	My Life As A Teenage Robot	Danny Phantom	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Unfabulous	Dark Oracle	The Fairly Odd Parents	All That	Romeo	As Told By Ginger	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			To Saudi With Love				Ginuwang Tala		[illegible]				Kalaboog En Bosyo				Maharot		
Qtv	Pawnshop No. 8	Samurai X	Hikaru No Go	The Prince Of Tennis	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Winter Sonata	Irene	Emperor Of The Sea	Takeshi's Castle	Family Zoo		News On Q	Women's Desk		Irene	Value Added Treasures
RPN 9	TV Shopping	Diva's Day		Roundtable Discussion	Mr. Fighting	RPN Aksyon Balita		Complete Savages	Jake In Progress	The 4400		Medium		Cold Case		Newswatch Now	P-Max	Kasangga Mo Ang Langit	Police Hour
SBN 21								Sony Music Video				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Friends Again		Sony Music Video	
Solar Sports						Gillette World Sport	Gillette World Sport	Billiards: US 9 Ball		WPT Tour				Hoop Nation		Sportsdesk		Autofocus	
Star Movies			Control			Romeo And Juliet (5:15 PM)					Dr. Dolittle (7:25 PM)			Spymate			Lord Of War		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Dinner Table For Three		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	Hope & Faith	According To Jim	The Office	Two And A Half Men	The Drew Carey Show		Seinfeld	Hope & Faith
Studio 23								Blog	Pinoy Dream Academy	Wazzup Wazzup	Totally Outrageous	Two And A Half Men	Will & Grace	Grey's Anatomy		News Central	Gantz (10:45PM)		MYXlog
UnTV				KNC Show	Kakampi Mo Ang Batas		Kaka at Ciriaz Kasagapay N'yo		Public Hearing	Make My Day		Ang Dating Daan (8:15PM)							

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

IN THIS ISSUE

- **Added boost** for export sector sought /B3
- **US looks for new** sources of RP mangoes /B6

Website: www.inq7money.net

BUSINESS

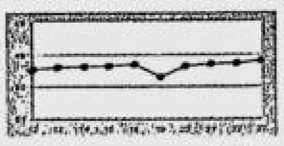
Editor Raul O. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma

Text us your feedback: inquirer biz name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) **E-mail:** business@inquirer.com.ph

Swabe ang dating, lakas ng hatak. Max. Diesel Max.
PETRON
DIESEL
MAX

Peso rallies to highest in nearly 6 years

INDICATORS



P49.195 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Dec. 27, 2006

Closes at 49.195 to $1; seen breaching 48 level soon

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY RALLIED TO ITS HIGHEST IN nearly six years at 49.185 before closing at 49.195 to a dollar on the influx of overseas remittances and investment inflows after the four-day Christmas holiday break.

The local currency would have gained more if not for some open market intervention by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, currency traders said. The BSP was believed to have bought dollars at 49.20 to stem the peso's sharp appreciation at the Philippine Dealing System.

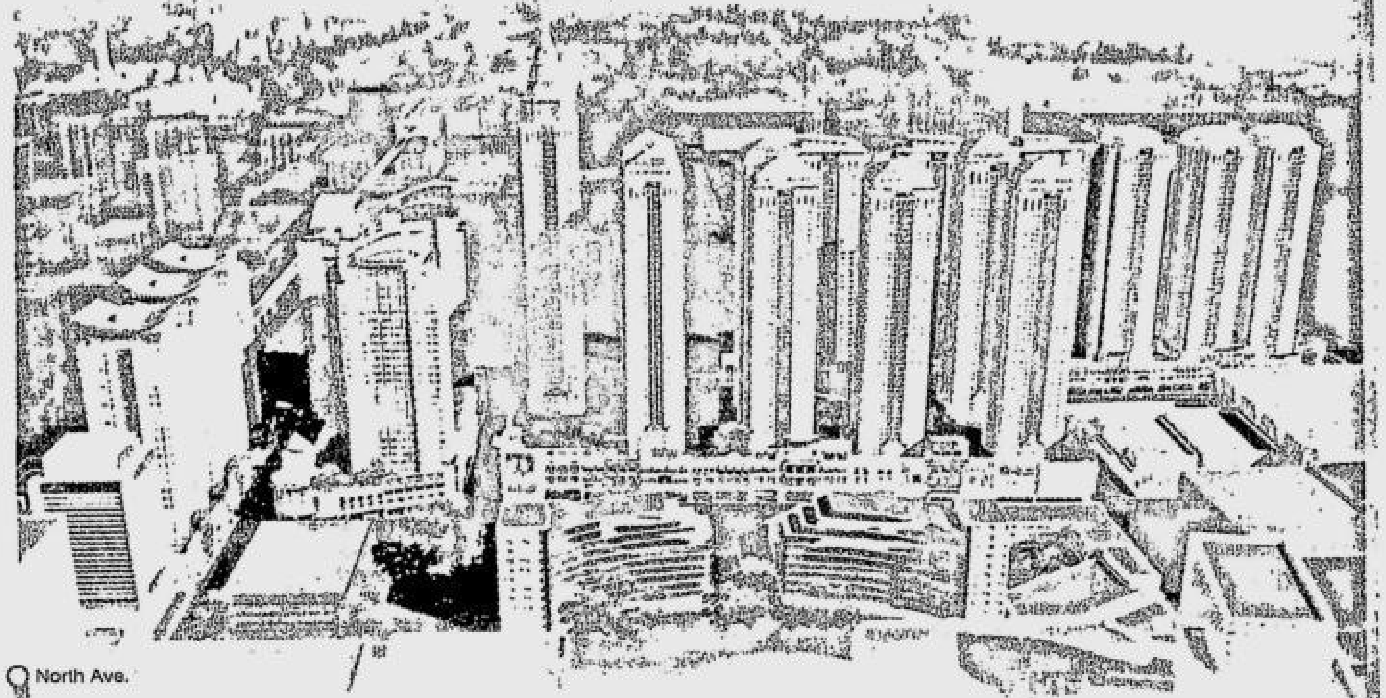
Yesterday's peak was the highest reached by the peso since touching 49.14 on March 28, 2001. The closing rate of 49.195 was also the strongest finish since ending at 49.16 on March 27, 2001.

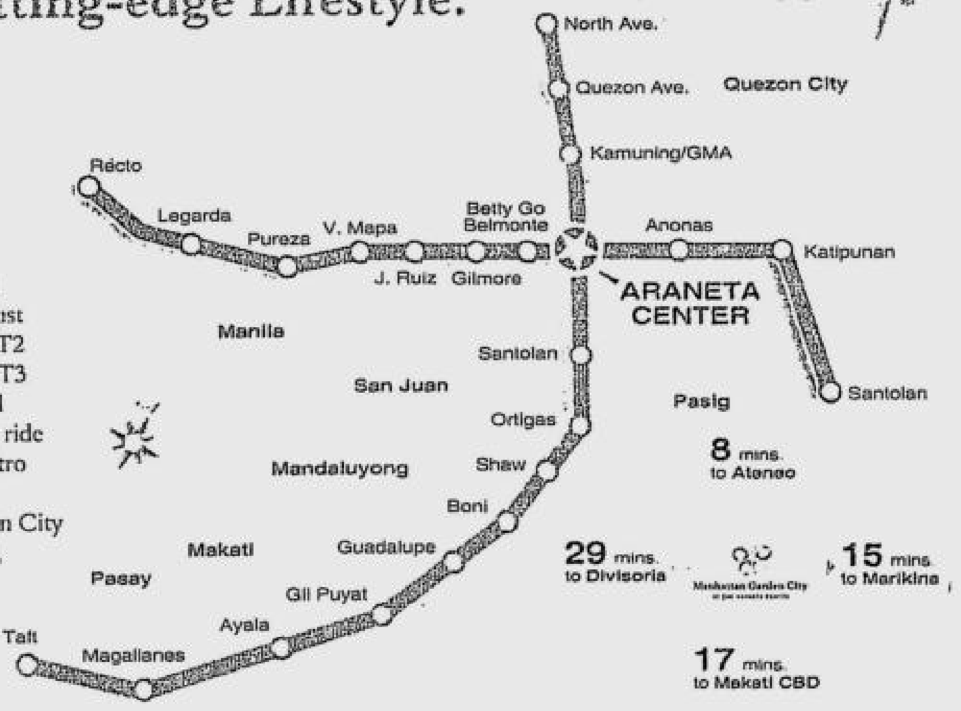
A strong regional currency market,

PESO/ B2

Manhattan Garden City
AT THE ARANETA CENTER

Connecting You to the Metro's Most Important Destinations. *And* to a Cutting-edge Lifestyle.





The Manhattan Garden City is the country's first transit-oriented development, linking you to not just one but two train systems: the LRT2 along Aurora Boulevard. And MRT3 along EDSA. So you're just a stroll away from a quick and traffic-free ride to virtually all major points of Metro Manila.

What's more, Manhattan Garden City connects you to the shops, offices, restaurants and entertainment centers at the Araneta Center. So you can live, shop, play and move like never before.

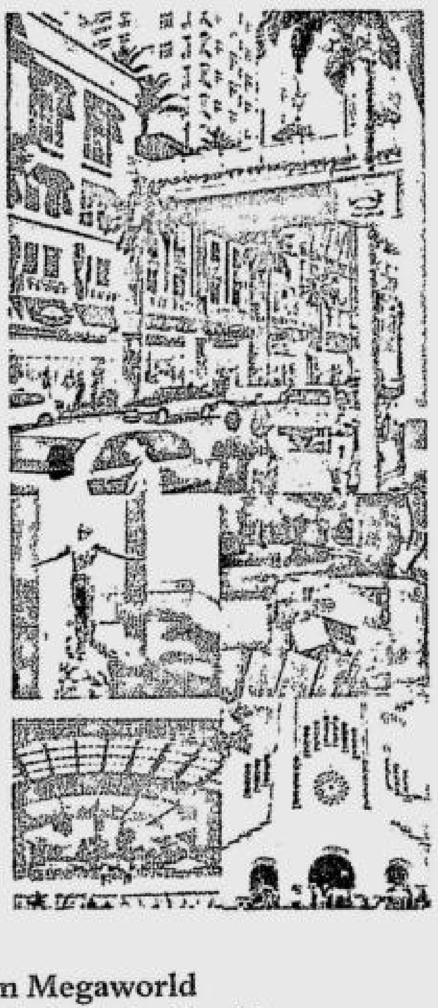
Easy ride around the metro.

A 729-meter-long footbridge standing four stories above the streets interconnects all 20 residential towers of your community. And leads you straight to the LRT2 and MRT3. There are lush greenery and benches. So going to the train stations is as enjoyable as a walk in the park.

With the trains close by, the power to go places is yours. Your children can be in Ateneo or UP in Quezon City in just 8 minutes via the LRT2. Or Manila's university belt in 19 minutes.

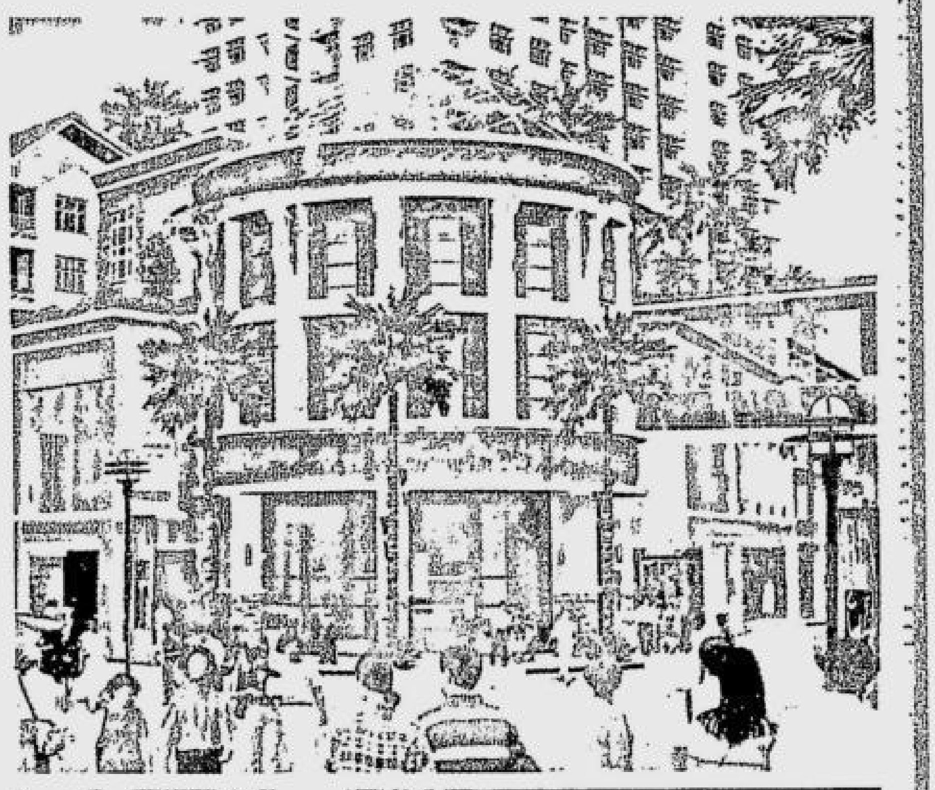
Your wife can get to Divisoria's bargain stores in 29 minutes. While you can be in your office in Ortigas in 6 minutes, Ayala Avenue in 17 minutes or Taft Avenue in 22 minutes through the MRT3. And since both lines link up with the LRT1, you can reach many more places in the metro than ever before.

This means you spend *less* time on the road. And *more* fun time with family and friends.



Easy link to the Araneta Center.

Manhattan Garden City enjoys direct access to the giant playground that's the Araneta Center. Your entry point is a **four-level transfer station** with a hotel-style lobby, grand staircase and four passenger elevators. The station connects you at the third level to the Gateway Mall and its Oasis floating garden. From there, you're just steps away from Rustan's, SM, Shopwise, Ali Mall, Farmers Plaza and the iconic Araneta Coliseum.



A FIRST from Megaworld in cooperation with Security Bank!

Own a Manhattan Parkway condo with

MEGAWORLD HOMELITE

A NEW ERA IN AFFORDABLE HOME FINANCING

Now, you can own a luxurious studio at Manhattan Parkway the really easy way—for as low as **P10,246 a month fixed for 20 years.**

Choose from our revolutionary, budget-friendly packages, including HOMELITE 10, HOMELITE 15 or HOMELITE 25.

For more details, inquire from our HOMELITE specialist.

Call 810-3333 now.

Visit our SHOWROOM at the third floor of the Gateway Mall.

Manhattan Parkway
Paradise in the Sky

Manhattan Parkway Residences
at the Manhattan Garden City, Araneta Center

Manhattan Garden City welcomes you to its first phase: Manhattan Parkway. Take your pick of cozy executive studios and relaxing one-bedroom suites housed in three towers. With sweeping views of the Araneta Center and Manila Bay. At the fourth-story garden deck, enjoy the trellised walkways, jogging trails, fitness station, indoor sauna/spa and gym. And you're just a footbridge away from more play amenities—and more fun—at the upcoming phases.

Joint Venture Partner:
Araneta Center
www.aranetacenter.net

Exclusive Marketing Agent:
MEGAWORLD CENTRAL PROPERTIES, INC
inquire@themanhattangardencity.com

DEVELOPER:
MEGAWORLD CORPORATION
www.megaworldcorp.com
ISO 9001:2000 CERTIFIED

For Announcement Purposes Only

BDO-PCIBank merger wins stockholders' approval

Union seen to create country's second biggest bank

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE STOCKHOLDERS OF BANCO de Oro Universal Bank and Equitable PCIBank, both controlled by retail tycoon Henry Sy, yesterday approved the two lenders' merger that would create the country's second biggest bank with P613 billion in assets.

The largest merger in Philippine banking history will be done through a share swap, with BDO exchanging 1.8 of its shares for each share of EPCIBank.

The emerging bank will be called Banco de Oro-EPCI Bank, with BDO as the surviving entity.

In separate special meetings, stockholders owning more than two-thirds of the outstanding capital stock of BDO and EPCIBank voted in favor of the merger of equals.

The merger of the country's third (EPCIBank) and fifth (BDO) biggest banks will dislodge the Ayala group's Bank of the Philippine Islands from the number two slot with total assets of about P529 billion.

SY

TAN

By a very narrow margin, Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. is still the country's biggest bank in terms of assets worth P629 billion.

Elmer Serrano, BDO corporate information officer, also disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange that, in line with the merger, BDO would increase its authorized capital stock to P65 billion.

The authorized capital will be divided into 5.5 billion common shares and 1 billion preferred shares, all with a par value of P10 per share.

Although the SM group has yet to consummate its purchase of another 25.84-percent stake in EPCIBank held by the Social Security System, the state-owned pension fund voted in favor of the merger with BDO. A plan of merger needs consent from at least two-thirds, or 67 percent, of stockholders to push through under corporate laws.

Teresita Sy-Coson will chair BDO-EPCIBank while her father, Henry Sy, will remain chair emeritus. BDO president Nestor Tan will be president of the merged bank.

The legal closing of the transaction is expected by the first quarter of 2007, while full consolidation of all 698 branches will be consummated within 24 to 30 months.

Bank management expects the merger to result in an improvement in earnings, a potential appreciation in stock price with the increase in market capitalization, and enhanced franchise value. It is also expected to yield cost savings and higher revenue and an upgrade in the merged bank's credit rating.

PLDT to charge data transmission via landlines

By Riza T. Olchondra

PHILIPPINE LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE Co. (PLDT) will start charging fees for data transmission using its basic telephone landlines.

Through what it calls the alternate voice data line (AVD), subscribers who use the same basic telephone line for voice calls and data transmission will be required to connect a special data or voice access device to the basic telephone line.

PLDT said the service will provide a secure means to automatically process and authorize credit card transactions, real-time. One common use for AVD is credit card verification for business subscribers.

"We have observed the increasing use of the basic line for data transmission originating from multiple attachments of data terminals, imposing additional load to the (network). To protect basic service quality and network integrity, it is necessary to price said attachments to appropriately manage and control additional load that is riding on the basic service line," PLDT said in an application that was recently approved by the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC).

The regulator said it approved the new service in line with the government thrust to encourage more customer-friendly and affordable telecom services in the country.

PLDT said it will charge a monthly service fee of P300, which also covers VAT, for the basic AVD service.

An additional fee of P50 to P500 will be added to the charge for connecting an AVD device for residential use and P100 to P1,000 for business use. Other charges will be added for additional services that will use the same line.

Gov't subsidies to GOCCs, GFIs hit P10.3B in 11 mos

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT SPENT P10.26 billion in the first 11 months of the year to provide subsidies to state-owned firms, or 15.7-percent more than the P8.87 billion given a year ago, documents from the Department of Finance showed.

The subsidies formed part of the P940.76 billion worth of expenditures of the national government in the 11-month period.

The government extends subsidies to government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs) and government financial institutions (GFIs) to support their operations and programs that could not be covered due to cash shortages.

The rise in the subsidies provided by the government to state-owned firms defeated the earlier intention of fiscal authorities to reduce financial support to these entities that should be self-supporting in nature.

The Department of Finance, which oversees the operations of GOCCs and GFIs, is pushing for a bill that will no longer require the national government to grant subsidies to state-owned firms to force them to exercise fiscal discipline.

The bill, however, has not been placed in the list priorities of Congress.

DOF documents showed that the biggest beneficiaries of subsidies from the government from January to November this year were: Philhealth, P1.7 billion; National Housing Authority, P1.47 billion; Land Bank of the Philippines, P1.26 billion; National Electrification Administration, P1.19 billion, and National Food Authority, P908 million.

The subsidy granted to Land Bank is used to implement the government's agrarian reform program, which the state-owned bank oversees.

The DOF is working on the implementation of a scorecard system, under which GOCCs and GFIs will be asked to set performance targets, such as revenue generation. Those who will meet their respective targets will be granted incentives, while those who will fall short will be subjected to possible reorganization.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves earlier said each state-owned firm would be required to sign a performance contract stating the performance targets.

The fiscal performance of GOCCs and GFIs are reflected in the consolidated public sector fiscal position.

The national government has set a target of reducing the consolidated public sector deficit (CPSD) in 2007 by 37 percent to only P80.8 billion from the P128.1-billion ceiling under the 2006 fiscal program.

The CPSD is the combined deficits of the national government, state-owned firms, social security institutions and local government units.

More energy firms seen holding IPOs

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY is bullish that, with the success of recent initial public offerings held by energy firms, more power generation companies will list on the Philippine Stock Exchange in the coming months.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said the overwhelming investor response to the recent listing of PNOC Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC) should encourage power generation companies to hold their IPOs.

"This shows the high level of confidence in the country right now. What we're looking forward to are the spillover effects on the (generation companies)," he said.

He added that most of the generation firms in the country were now looking at raising funds for expansion and new acquisitions. This, he said, should prompt them to consider listing on the local bourse.

PNOC officer in charge Pedro Aquino Jr. earlier said the state firm was also considering listing on the PSE, following the successful IPO of subsidiary PNOC-EDC.

PNOC-EDC listed on Dec. 14 almost 40 percent of its shares on the bourse, raising about P16.7 billion.

Lotilla said the listing "bodes well for the government, as it indicates strong investor interest."

"With the listing, PNOC-EDC can better pursue expansion projects. But this is still on top of the (Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001)-mandated privatization of (National Power Corp.) plants with steam sales contracts with PNOC-EDC," he said.

"We'll continue to look for expansion opportunities in the domestic market for EDC. Also, more opportunities are waiting overseas," he added.

Shares close higher

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.88-PERcent higher yesterday, hitting a nine-and-a-half-year high, due largely to yearend window-dressing, dealers said.

They said some fund managers adjusted their portfolios just before the end of the year but volumes were light as many investors were still away for the Christmas holidays.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index rose 25.16 points to 2,883.47 after moving between 2,858.31 and 2,886.98 points.

It was the index's best close since June 19, 1997, when it ended at 2,905.97.

Losers led gainers 45 to 41 with 67 unchanged. Volume totaled 3.3 billion shares worth P1.74 billion. *AFP*

Peso rallies to highest in nearly 6 years

From page B1

supported by the Thai baht's rebound against the dollar, also helped keep the local currency buoyant.

The Bank of Thailand was forced to partially reverse capital control measures after the Thai stock market plunged 15 percent last week, but investors remained wary of that country, the epicenter of the Asian currency turmoil of 1997.

This developed as the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reaffirmed its commitment to a market-oriented approach to capital flows in the aftermath of Thailand's recent bold moves to curb the appreciation of the baht, Asia's strongest currency this year.

"We consider foreign flows as an important, in fact, a critical ingredient to sustain economic growth," BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said.

"There's no viable substitute to market-oriented approach to capital account transactions," he said.

Before the long Christmas break, the peso also gained from some offshore investors switching to assets in other Asian currencies following the Thai scare.

Marcelo Ayes, senior vice president at Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., yesterday said the peso could break into the 48:$1 level in the next few days.

"There's no way to go but up," Ayes said.

Aside from remittances from overseas Filipino workers, which seasonally remain strong until early January, prospective foreign investments inflows are keeping the market bullish on the peso.

Ayes said the payment for the purchase by the First Pacific group in local telecommunications giant Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. would again flood the market with dollars before the year ends or early next year.

Guinigundo said the government was confident that the Philippines' improving economic fundamentals would sustain investor interest while maintaining a free market.

"If we are convinced that what we're doing is right and what we're seeing in terms of macroeconomic fundamentals is good then by all means let the market decide for itself. Let the market review the emerging situation and see the durability of various economic reforms we have undertaken especially in the fiscal sector," Guinigundo said.

"To us, the flexible exchange rate system remains the appropriate mechanism for determining not only resource allocation but also capital flows. If you look at the exchange and how it's doing, you know it's flexible and there's no moral hazard there, unlike before when the peso's movement is likened to the heart of a rock," he explained.

Guinigundo also explained that the Philippines was nowhere near the danger zone as it was still in the very early stages of a boom cycle.

He noted that the main-share Philippine Stock Exchange composite index was still around the 2,800 levels as against the historic high of 3,400 during the pre-Asian crisis regime. Neither is the country nearing an asset price bubble, with real estate prices, though on an uptrend, were still too low relative to pre-crisis levels.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 27, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	7.3	7.4	7.3	7.4	17,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	47	47	45.5	46	306,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	62.5	63	62	63	559,800
China Banking Corp.	690	690	690	690	40
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	600
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.47	0.48	0.47	0.48	510,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	83.5	84.5	83.5	84.5	130,200
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	51	51.5	51	51.5	896,100
Philippine National Bank	44	44	44	44	7,900
Philippine Trust Co.	50	50	50	50	100
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.5	20,000
Security Bank Corp.	66	66.5	66	66.5	80,100
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
ATR Kimeng Fin. Corp.	1.96	1.96	1.96	1.96	1,000
Bankard Inc.	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.73	100,000
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	1,000
First Abacus Financial	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	50,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1640	1640	1640	1640	110
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	272.5	275	272.5	275	3,500
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2085	2085	2085	2085	410
Ivantage Corp.	1.6	1.64	1.6	1.64	5,228,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	4.45	4.6	4.45	4.6	29,084,000
First Gen Corp.	54.5	55	54.5	55	355,400
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	63	63	63	63	584,000
Manila Electric Co. A	54	54	54	54	33,000
Manila Electric Co. B	55	55	54	54	403,800
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.5	9.6	9.5	9.5	2,213,000
Petron Corp.	4.05	4.15	4.05	4.05	3,510,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.12	1.14	1.12	1.12	1,798,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	21	21	20	20	96,700
Jollibee Foods Corp.	42	42	41.5	41.5	233,100
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.8	2.85	2.65	2.65	537,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	290,000
San Miguel Corp. A	67	67	66	66.5	222,900
San Miguel Corp. B	74	74.5	74	74	105,000
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.16	2.16	2.1	2.1	90,000
Universal Robina Corp.	18.75	18.75	18.5	18.75	2,441,400
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1	1	0.94	0.96	8,760,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	3.15	3.2	3.1	3.2	631,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	12,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	7.6	7.7	7.6	7.6	2,672,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	16,000
Republic Cement Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	220,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	399,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	10,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	0.71	0.72	0.7	0.71	5,050,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.195	0.2	0.19	0.195	5,970,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	50,000,000
Ayala Corp.	545	570	545	570	207,980
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.67	0.68	0.67	0.67	200,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.9	568,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	8.2	8.4	8.2	8.4	9,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	7,100,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.8	2.85	2.8	2.85	78,000
APC Group Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.37	990,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.16	1.18	1.14	1.14	5,038,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.76	1.76	1.52	1.52	310,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	25,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	50,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	2.2	2.22	2.2	2.2	3,421,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	5.6	6	5.6	6	94,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	3.5	3.55	3.5	3.5	190,000
F&J Prince Holdings Corp.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	50,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.185	0.205	0.185	0.205	230,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	110,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	10.25	10.75	10.25	10.75	591,700
Medco Holdings	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	100,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	500,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	4.05	4.05	3.85	3.85	11,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	1.58	1.64	1.54	1.6	267,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	60,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	500,000
SM Investments Corp.	307.5	312.5	307.5	312.5	112,380
South China Resources Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	100,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.52	1.54	1.52	1.54	11,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	6,410,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	15.25	15.25	15	15.25	3,270,700
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.48	0.48	80,000
Belle Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	17,574,000
A Brown Co. Inc.	1.62	1.62	1.52	1.56	708,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.15	3.2	3.15	3.2	183,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	40,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	350,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.53	0.54	2,050,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	120,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	1,500,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2	2	1.98	1.98	3,314,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.5	2.55	2.5	2.55	10,000
Interport Res.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	100,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.009	0.009	0.0085	0.0085	11,000,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	38,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.47	0.47	0.44	0.45	1,720,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.63	0.63	0.61	0.61	1,400,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.24	2.3	2.24	2.28	85,200,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	5.3	5.4	5	5	414,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.36	1,330,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	15.5	16	15.5	15.5	951,700
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.64	0.68	0.64	0.66	4,430,000
SM Development Corp.	2.55	2.65	2.5	2.5	2,004,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	10	10.5	10	10.5	7,834,800
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	50,000
Uniwide Holdings, Inc.	0.115	0.115	0.11	0.11	3,210,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	20	20	20	20	9,200
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	1,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.9	1.94	1.9	1.94	703,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1230	1235	1230	1230	15,120
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	3,568,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2370	2380	2350	2350	190,230
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	3,390,000
Imperial Res.	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.019	4,100,000
Ionics Inc.	2.08	2.1	2.08	2.1	41,000
IPVG Corp.	4	4	3.9	3.9	469,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.06	0.06	0.0575	0.06	3,300,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	10,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.8	2.8	2	2.08	8,738,000
Philweb Corp.	0.031	0.032	0.031	0.031	30,600,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.3	1.32	1.3	1.32	330,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	19.75	20	19.75	20	124,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.04	2.06	2	2	1,360,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	2,090,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.2	25,000
Far Eastern University	800	800	800	800	30
Ipeople Inc.	3	3	3	3	80,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Paxys Inc.	19.5	19.5	19.25	19.25	1,962,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.9	331,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	6	6	5.9	6	117,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	30,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9.7	9.9	9.7	9.7	537,000
Benguet Corp. A	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	25,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.1	3,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	600,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	1,560,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.023	0.024	0.023	0.023	47,400,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.026	0.027	0.026	0.026	70,600,000
Omico Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.012	2,614,900,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4.05	4.1	4.05	4.05	6,087,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	18.75	18.75	18.5	18.5	30,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.74	0.74	0.71	0.74	1,080,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.62	1.62	1.36	1.38	15,782,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	1,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	16,800,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	11,100,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1	1.04	0.98	1.02	19,630,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1	1.06	0.99	1.06	7,050,000
PNOC Exploration Corp.-B	23	23	23	23	1,900
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	9.9	9.9	9.9	9.9	213,000

CURRENCIES

December 27, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.763184	1.000000	49.3280
Japan	Yen	0.006408	0.008396	0.4142
United Kingdom	Pound	1.491643	1.954500	96.4116
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.098114	0.128559	6.3416
Switzerland	Franc	0.624128	0.817795	40.3402
Canada	Dollar	0.657747	0.861846	42.5131
Singapore	Dollar	0.495092	0.648719	32.0000
Australia	Dollar	0.597171	0.782473	38.5978
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.024575	2.652801	130.8574
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.203516	0.266667	13.1541
Brunei	Dollar	0.493491	0.646621	31.8965
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000110	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.020990	0.027503	1.3567
UAE	Dirham	0.207935	0.272457	13.4398
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.310300	64.6345
Korea	Won	0.000821	0.001076	0.0531
China	Yuan**	0.097594	0.127877	6.3079
Argentina	Peso	0.250224	0.327869	16.1731
Brazil	Real	0.356412	0.467006	23.0365
Denmark	Kroner	0.134186	0.175824	8.6730
India	Rupee	0.017216	0.022558	1.1127
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.215771	0.282725	13.9463
Mexico	New Peso	0.070062	0.091802	4.5284
New Zealand	Dollar	0.534218	0.699986	34.5289
Norway	Kroner	0.122063	0.159939	7.8895
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012524	0.016410	0.8095
South Africa	Rand	0.108241	0.141828	6.9961
Sweden	Kroner	0.110834	0.145226	7.1637
Syria	Pound	0.014702	0.019264	0.9503
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023379	0.030634	1.5111
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000356	0.000466	0.0230

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time Dec. 26, 2006
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian Time Closing Rate as of 26-Dec-06

‘Champions’ out to slash gov’t red tape

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE NEWLY FORMED TASK FORCE ON Philippine Competitiveness has lined up programs to improve the country's attractiveness as an investment destination, focusing on the reduction of red tape and the easing of access to financing.

Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila, who is cochair of TFPC, said in a briefing that the group would hold quarterly meetings to iron out details of programs.

Favila explained that the first tasks of TFPC was organizational, such as appointing six private-sector "champions" who would be the key persons for previously identified areas of concern.

These areas include human resources, efficient public and private sector management, effective access to financing, improved transaction flows and costs (minimizing red tape), seamless infrastructure network, and energy cost competitiveness and self sufficiency.

"The champions are responsible for defining target results, coming up with ideas and suggestions to achieve the targets, (promoting these efforts) to relevant agencies, and validating and publicizing milestones," Favila said.

Favila said TFPC would push for a policy that promotes microfinancing as a viable component of the banking sector. It will also push for the review of the magna carta for SMEs and the Agri-Agra law to maximize their effectiveness, expansion of the government's SME lending program to reach the provinces, and the review of the Small Business Guarantee and Financing Corp.'s charter to increase lending to SMEs.

Created under Executive Order No. 571, the task force would be cochaired by Favila and Cesar Bautista, himself a former trade secretary, but this time representing the private sector.

Ambassadors Roberto Romulo and Donald Dee were also named members, while counterparts from the government would come from the departments of finance, transportation and education.

The private sector champions are lawyer Emerico de Guzman for human resource; Baltazar Endriga for management; Sergio R. Ortiz-Luis Jr., financing; Dave Balangue, transaction flows and costs; Meneleo Carlos, 'infrastructure, and Antonio del Rosario, energy.

Added boost for export sector sought

MONEY FOR A DEAR HONEY
A child has fun playing with a calculator next to a money changer in Zamboanga City. The peso yesterday marked another milestone, when it hit 49.185 against the US dollar. The peso's showing was its strongest in 6 years.
REUTERS

Manufacturers urged to diversify, develop other export products

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND Development Authority (Neda) will push for intensified government support for the export sector starting next year to help sustain the robust growth posted this year.

Neda Deputy Director General Augusto Santos said focus should be given on the implementation of programs that would help exporters develop other products that will be patronized in the global market.

"Currently, electronics account for about 70 percent of our exports," Santos told reporters. "If we want to help the export sector, diversification is the key."

The Neda official also said the agency was against a sharp and sudden appreciation of the peso, which made Philippine-made goods more expensive in the global market.

Santos said the government could not take the export industry for granted as revenues from this sector accounted for 30-40 percent of the country's total economic output.

This year, the export sector is credited for supporting the country's economic growth and compensating for the adverse effects of recent typhoons that badly affected agricultural production.

Despite the typhoons, the Neda remained optimistic that the country would still hit the 5.5-percent GDP growth target for this year.

The government has set an exports growth target of 10 percent for this year. For the first 10 months of the year, exports have already grown by 16.4 percent to $39.325 billion year-on-year, according to the National Statistics Office.

Dennis Arroyo, Neda director for policy and planning, said the performance of the export sector in January to October would result in a full-year growth of more than 10 percent.

The better-than-expected performance of the export sector this year was attributed to increased demand for electronics, particularly for consumer electronics like iPODs, MP3 players and cellular phones, among others, Arroyo said.

But some analysts said the Philippines' export sector might be headed for a slowdown next year, given the expected deceleration of the US economy, the country's biggest export market, accounting for about 16 percent of Philippine exports.

DENR to issue more mine permits

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND Natural Resources is set to issue more mining production sharing agreement (MPSA) permits this week.

DENR Secretary Angelo Reyes is now reviewing the mining permit of Manila Mining Corp.

The permit will allow Manila Mining to explore 2,463 hectares in Surigao del Norte for copper and gold resources.

Other companies that have applied for MPSA permits include Cagdianao Mining Corp. and its partner Norweah Metals and Minerals Inc., Kimhee Realty Corp. and Itawes Mining Exploration Company.

These medium-scale mining companies have applied for their respective Mineral Production Sharing Agreements to search for and extract nickel, chromite, limestone and cobalt resources, according to DENR documents.

The MPSA allows only Philippine companies to undertake mining ventures. The firms also get to enjoy incentives from the government.

The Financial or Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA), on the other hand, allows even a 100-percent owned foreign firm to engage in mining projects in the Philippines.

MAKE YOUR
₱ GROW

OPEN A 5-YEAR PESO TIME DEPOSIT NOW!
EARN AS HIGH AS 6.75% INTEREST P.A. TAX FREE!

INVESTMENT	*INTEREST RATE
P 50,000 - 99,999.00	6.50%
P 100,000 - 499,999.00	6.50%
P 500,000 - 999,999.00	6.50%
P 1,000,000 - 4,999,999.00	6.50%
P 5,000,000 - UP	6.75%

* RATES MAY CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Looking after you.

Bank of Commerce
www.bankcom.com.ph

Call us at 812-0000 locals 2250 / 2439 / 2233 / 2465
Member: PDIC & Megalink. Deposits insured up to P250,000 per depositor.

Text Bkcom<yourname><your landline><your e-mail address> send to 2327 for Globe or 0917-8902327 for non-Globe users

Group wants to build hotel on former IS property

A GROUP OF INVESTORS HAS EXPRESSED interest in putting up a five-star hotel on a one-hectare Makati property formerly occupied by the International School.

The group, which owns one of the Ritz Carlton Hotels in the Middle East, is expected to visit the country before the end of this month and make a call on President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to discuss its investment plans.

The former IS site was acquired by a consortium led by property developer Century Properties Inc. and its partners—Crescent Point Holdings Ltd. of Singapore and Picar Holdings Inc., a member of the AMA Group of Companies. The AMA Group is the main sponsor of the hotel project

Picar Holdings has a 27.5-percent share in the development consortium and is led by Ambassador Amable R. Aguiluz V.

AN OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
President, Republic of the Philippines
Malacanang Palace, Manila

Dear Madam President,

We, the 1,200 employees of Mirant Philippines Corporation, wish to bring to your urgent attention our situation in light of the recent sale of the company to the Japanese consortium Tokyo Electric Power Corporation and Marubeni by Atlanta-based Mirant Corporation.

The purchase of the company is a show of confidence in the Philippines. The sale, however, has placed us employees in quite a disadvantaged position and we are hoping that the President will be able to help in the resolution of our pending labor issues with Mirant. We do appreciate your recognition of the outstanding quality of the assets that we have painstakingly put together in the country for the past 17 years. We do hope too that you will not overlook the need to protect the interest of these very employees who made Mirant what it is right now.

As it is clear that we will be under a new management and our relationship with the old owners of the company will be severed, we have asked Mirant to grant each and every employee of the company separation benefits. This is to secure the years of service of our employees, some of whom have served the company for the past 17 years. It was the refusal of Mirant to favorably act on a request we have deemed to be fair and reasonable, that prompted us to seek the intervention of the DOLE.

Once we have been granted our separation benefits, it will then be the discretion of the new owners to reorganize and restructure the company as they see fit. We will certainly respect their prerogative. We have even committed our full cooperation in order to ensure the continued success and profitability of the company. The bottomline is to secure the years of service of every employee such that those who may be terminated, will be amply protected.

We remain confident that your administration will continue to uphold the interest and welfare of the Filipino workers.

Thank you very much.

Yours truly,

THE EMPLOYEES OF MIRANT PHILIPPINES CORPORATION

NOTICE OF CHANGE OF TELEPHONE NUMBERS

ING

Effective MONDAY, 01 January 2007
ING Bank N.V.
will have a new set of telephone numbers:

TRUNKLINE
479-8888

Wholesale Banking	
Financial Markets	479-8832
Wholesale Banking Products	479-8902
Wholesale Relationship Management	479-8881
Corporate Finance	479-8887
Investment Management	
Trust Department	479-8739
Personal Financial Services	479-8829
Private Banking	479-8803

Office address remains at 20th, 21st and 22nd Floors, Tower One
Ayala Triangle, Ayala Avenue, 1226 Makati City, Philippines

BICOL UNIVERSITY

Legazpi City

NOTICE OF SEARCH FOR THE NEW UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

The Bicol University Board of Regents has commenced the Search for a new University President to be appointed for a fixed term of four (4) years commencing on March 9, 2007, in accordance with the pertinent provisions of R.A. 8292.

Applicants must possess the following qualifications:

1. Must be a Filipino citizen
2. Preferably a holder of an earned doctoral degree
3. Preferably not more than sixty (60) years old at the time of application
4. At least five (5) years of relevant managerial and administrative experience
5. Morally upright
6. Has not been convicted by final judgment of any crime involving moral turpitude
7. Proven capability in resource generation and networking
8. Experience or involvement in community service

Required clearances, where applicable:

1. Ombudsman
2. Civil Service Commission
3. National Bureau of Investigation
4. Regional Trial Court
5. Provincial Prosecutor's Office
   N.B. While the 1st two (2) clearances are required only from applicants who are already in government service, all applicants both from the government and private sectors must submit the last three (3).

Application/Nomination should be accompanied by:

1. Detailed Curriculum Vitae and documentary evidences supportive of qualifications.
2. Statement of Vision, Mission and Thrusts for Bicol University
3. Medical Clearance that include results of drug test
4. Result of Neuro-Psychiatric Examination in a sealed envelope

Deadline of submission: December 31, 2006

Submit applications including credentials with duly certified supporting documents in five sets to:

THE CHAIRPERSON
Search Committee for the BU Presidency
c/o Dr. Milagros S. Esparrago
Commission on Higher Education
Regional Office 5
EM's Barrio-South
Barangay 2
Legazpi City

Or, to:

OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER NENALYN P. DEFENSOR
c/o Ms. Jennilyn M. Salubayba
Commission on Higher Education
5th Floor, DAP Building
San Miguel Avenue
Ortigas Center
Pasig City

17TH PHILIPPINE TRAVEL MART

In support of the thrust of the government to promote the Philippines as a healthcare and wellness hub, the 17th Philippine Travel Mart has as its theme "Health and Wellness – The Next Frontier" held at Mega Trade Halls – SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City on September 8-10, 2006. PTM had a whole hall of 900 sq. meters dedicated to health and wellness in partnership with Quezon City Chamber of Commerce and Industry (QCCI) and Quezon City Government as co-presentor. In photo are Quezon City Mayor Feliciano "Sonny" Belmonte together with the officers of PHILTOA and QCCI.

NREA bullish on '07 housing prospects

MANGIO

MANALAD

REFLECTING on the good performance of the country's economy, prospects for housing opportunities in the coming year will continue to peak, built upon the strong fundamentals that were created in year 2006, according to the housing trend forecasts by the National Real Estate Association (NREA).

"We are bullish in housing next year with the continuing inflow to the country of dollar remittances from overseas Filipino workers coupled with the greater availability of low-interest and long-term homebuyers' finance," according to architect Nestor S. Mangio, president of Central Country Estates and concurrent NREA board chairman.

The surge of dollar remittances during the latter part of 2006 will continue to fuel consumer spending, particularly for housing acquisition well into next year, for which the country's housing developers have lined up their housing projects to meet the housing requirements of the overseas workers, Architect Mangio said.

For his part, Jose V. Manalad, founding chairman and concurrent president of the National Real Estate Association, informed that the increased availability of low-cost funds to finance housing acquisition from the primary mortgage credit window-the Home Development Mutual Fund, or Pag-IBIG Fund, will help sustain the emerging housing boom.

"For the first time in many years, private banks and financing institutions who used to rely more on short-term fund investments, are making available 25-year, fixed-term consumer loans for housing acquisition at very reasonable interest rates and loan conditions, something that only government pension and provident funds were doing in the past," Manalad pointed out.

The policy and program reforms being undertaken by the government housing agencies, under the present stewardship of vice pres. Noli de Castro, concurrent chairman of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, are providing a business climate for housing that is conducive to the sector's growth, he added.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
INTERNATIONAL TRAINING & INNOVATION CONSULTING INC. 10/F IBM Plaza Bldg., Eastwood City, Libis, Quezon City	Richard Rene Noel Ermann	IT Project Manager
SUMMERSAULT INC. 12/F Chatham House, 116 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Hye Shim Kim (w/o Lee)	Marketing Project Lead-Korean
MIT UNIVERSAL INSTITUTE, INC. 4/F JGC Phils., Annex Bldg. 1608 Trade St. cor. Investment Drive MBP, Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa	Hyockchu Kwon	School Administrator
ANGLO-EASTERN CREW MANAGEMENT PHILS., INC. 100 L.P. Leviste cor. H.V. dela Costa St., 5/F Don Chua Lamko Bldg., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Deepankar Mathuranath Das	Training Consultant
NPC ALLIANCE CORPORATION 22/F Citibank Tower, Paseo de Roxas Makati City	Seyedjavad Ahmadi	Managing Director
YK-REMNANT TRAVEL & TOURS CORP. 50 Apitong St., Montevista Subd., Marikina City	Kwangsik Yoon	President
WWW.GOOD & BEST ISLAND TOUR.COM INCORPORATED Room 1, FILCO, Roxas Blvd., cor. Salud St., Pasay City	Tae Sik Choi	General Manager
WWW.GOOD & BEST ISLAND TOUR.COM INCORPORATED Room 1, FILCO, Roxas Blvd., cor. Salud St., Pasay City	Hyounggyu Choi	Sales Manager
WWW.GOOD & BEST ISLAND TOUR.COM INCORPORATED Room 1, FILCO, Roxas Blvd., cor. Salud St., Pasay City	Byung Deok Lee	Marketing Manager
UNITOP GENERAL MERCHANDISE INC. 5006 Rosario St., Mapulang Lupa, Valenzuela City	Guo Zheng	Branch Manager
JGC PHILIPPINES INC. 2109 Prime St., Magrigal Business Park, Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Rieko Hoshino	Assistant Division Manager (Corporate Administration)

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI-Dec. 28, 2006)

ERRATA

In the **NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S** of the **DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT (DOLE-NCR)**, the names of the following foreign nationals were misspelled:

Aysegul Goren of Siemens, Inc. (published: Dec. 12)
Zhijian Liang of Caspo Incorporated (published: Dec. 16)

Our apologies.

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFICATION AND SEALED BIDDING

The Northern Samar Electric Cooperative, Inc. (NORSAMELCO) has received fund from the Department of Energy (DOE) E.R. 1-94. The proceed of allocated funding is for construction of the DX-Line under the Rural Electrification Program.

Interested parties are hereby invited to a Pre-Qualification and sealed Bidding for supply or hereunder mention project:

Project : Construction of distribution line for 35 barangays under AWP'06
Location : NORSAMELCO Covorage area
Contract : Supply & Labor of materials
Brief Description Supply of materials used for dx-line construction of 35 Brgys and Labor for construction

Approved Total Budget For the Contract (ABC) : Php46,421,426.85

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference, Evaluation of bids, Post Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of NEA-EC's procurement manual and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	UNITS
1 Pole Line Hardwares	1	Lot
2 Cutout & Arrester Comb., w/ Load Break, AB Chance, Org.	79	pcs.
3 Conductor wire: BRAND: Unicon, Phelp Dodge, Phillex or American Wire Cable		
a Conductor, Bare, ACSR #2, AWG. 6/1	259,800	meters
b Conductor, Bare, ACSR #1/0, AWG. 6/1	151,400	meters
c Conductor, Duplex, #2, AWG. 6/1	10,650	meters
4 TRANSFORMER, double bushing w/ external tap changer BRAND NEW; met the standard tech. specs (Philec, Wagner and the like)		
a 15 KVA	39	units
b 25 KVA	9	units
5 Steel Pole, 8 sides, 3.5mm, Hot Dip Galvanized		
a. 30/4ft-top dia. 100mm, bottom dia. 200mm, 2 sections	268	pcs.
b. 35/4ft-top dia. 120mm, bottom dia. 210mm, 2 sections	1266	pcs.
c. 40/4ft-top dia. 127mm, bottom dia. 251mm, 2 sections	42	pcs.
6 Anchor Log, 9"x4'	1256	pcs.
7 Crossarm, Wood, 3- 1/2" x 4 - 1/2"x8'	727	pcs.
8 Supply of Labor	1	lot

BAC ACTIVITIES	Schedule		
	Time	Date	Venue
1 Receipt from prospective Bidders of Letter of Intent (LOI) including Application of Eligibility		12/23/2006 3-Jan-07	NORSAMELCO Brgy. Magsaysay Bobon N. Samar
2 Issuance of Eligibility Forms		5-Jan-07	NORSAMELCO, Brgy. Magsaysay
3 Receipt of Eligibility Requirements (deadline)		9-Jan-07	NORSAMELCO, Brgy. Magsaysay
4 Issuance of Bid Documents		9-Jan-07	NORSAMELCO, Brgy. Magsaysay
5 Pre-Bid Conference	10:15am	10-Jan-07	Conference Rm. NORSAMELCO
6 Documents Opening of Sealed bid	10:15am	30-Jan-07	Conference Rm. NORSAMELCO

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at the NORSAMELCO, Brgy. Magsaysay, Bobon, N. Samar, upon submission of Letter of Intent (LOI) and upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Seven Thousand Pesos (PhP 7,000.00) to our PBAC Secretarial. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the same address. The PBAC will use non discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility check/ Screening as well as the preliminary examination of Bids.

Only qualified bidders who were passed during the pre-qualification screening will be allowed to participate in the bidding. Bid proposals must be accompanied by Bid security equivalent to 5% of the total bid price in an acceptable form.

NORSAMELCO hereby reserves the right to reject any or all bids without disclosing any reason, to waive any minor defects or infirmities therein, and to accept such bids as may be deemed advantageous to NORSAMELCO.

For further information please contact the following nos. 09173042867/09173042869/055-5009496, telefax # 055-2518163.

(Sgd.) NILO A. ESTOPA
PBAC-Chairman

(PDI--Dec. 22 & 28, 2006)

FOERDE MARINE AGENCY INC.

Unit 9B, Chatham House Condominium,
116 Rufino St., Salcedo Village, Makati City

SO THAT ALL MAY KNOW

The following are no longer nominee Directors / Stockholders of this agency:

Jay C. Retoriano – 1 share – 200 Php. par value.
Cherry Lyn G. Olalia-Retoriano – 1 share – 200 Php. par value.
Andre Czaya – 1 share – 200 Php. par value.

The new nominee Directors / Stockholders are:

Romeo F. Guerrero – 1 share – 200 Php. par value.
Rodolfo F. Guerrero – 1 share – 200 Php. par value.
Artur M. Mosek – 1 share – 200 Php. par value.

As per requirements of POEA

BUY * SELL * PAWN
WATCHES
JEWELRY
DIAMONDS
BEST OFFER IN TOWN
8342886
8040484

WE BUY
at HIGH PRICE
ROLEX
HIS & HERS Watch Center
GoldCrest Bldg.
Glorietta-2
5646593 5897041
0917-8473744

Pag-IBIG wins ARAW values award

THE PAG-IBIG FUND GRABBED A bronze trophy for its "Tapat sa Pag-IBIG" campaign during the recent awarding ceremony for the 2006 ARAW Values Advertising Awards (AVA).

Pag-IBIG was recognized in the multimedia campaign category under Branded Communications. The other finalists in the same category were ABS-CBN, Philippine National Bank and Global Brands, Inc.

The Fund launched its print and radio campaign in 2005 drawing on the Filipino values of loyalty and honor to urge employers to remit their employees' contributions, and borrowers to pay their loan amortizations religiously.

Pag-IBIG has increased its total collections from P26.98 billion in 2000 to P47.38 billion in 2005.

Lawyer Romero Quimbo, president and CEO of the Pag-IBIG Fund, said that the award "is a welcome bonus for us, on top of attaining our campaign's objective of raising awareness about every member's important role as a stakeholder in the Fund."

"This latest recognition is an affirmation of our efforts to explore every avenue to promote the Fund's growth and improve its services," he stated.

Last October, the Pag-IBIG Fund received the Scroll of Honour Award from the UN-Habitat for its accomplishments in providing affordable homes to hundreds thousands of families.

The AVA is a biennial awards program of the Advertising Board of the Philippines and Advertising Foundation of the Philippines honoring outstanding works in the advertising industry that help promote and communicate Filipino values.

Child neurology congress set

THE CHILD NEUROLOGY SOciety of the Philippines Inc, in cooperation with the Philippine Neurological Association will host the 9th Asian and Oceanian Congress of Child Neurology (AOCCN) on Jan. 24-27 at the Waterfront Hotel in Cebu city. With its theme "Building Bridges in the Practice of Child Neurology," the congress is the first international gathering in pediatric neuroscience to be held in the country.

The congress' main objective is to promote the neurological health of all the children in the region through an active exchange of knowledge and expertise not only among the different member-nations of the region but also among the different medical and paramedical disciplines involved in the care of children with neurological problems.

Dr. Aida Salonga, president of the 9th AOCCN, together with the organizing committee, has crafted a program of activities which includes topics that will focus on the burden of childhood neurological and mental health problems, the effects of the environment on the developing brain and the application of advanced research and technology in the improvement of diagnostic, therapeutic and neuroprotective modalities for our children.

To date, the organizers have confirmed the participation of 56 foreign and eight local speakers, all experts in their field, who will either be in the main convention consisting of six plenary lectures, 12 simultaneous symposia topics, three special symposia for discussions on regional activities, six industry-sponsored luncheon symposia, and two breakfast meetings. Workshops and simultaneous symposia will focus on the common neurological disorders such as epilepsy, ADHD, learning disabilities, electroencephalography and the use of botulinum toxin in spasticity.

The socials committee has planned activities for the Asian and Oceanian delegates, among which are the first Fukuyama Cup which tees-off on Jan. 24, fellowship and cultural night. You may visit the congress website : www.aoccn2007.org.

JOB Market COMPACT JOB Market
Get more exposure for your ad
Advertise in JobMarket Compact
Inquirer Compact available in all key cities in Luzon.
Inquire about the JobMarket package at 897-8808 loc 514.

Our Dearly Beloved

Judge Bienvenido Z. Canlas

of Santa Rita, Pampanga

*Peacefully joined his Creator
on December 26, 2006 at the age of 75.*

His bereaved wife, **Rosario**; children & children-in-law **Jesus Bienvenido & Evangeline, Dolorosa Amalia & Hilario, Ma. Rosario & Jay Ferdinand, Jose Tiburcio, Virginia Lourdes & Arnold**; grandchildren **JB III, Clara, Rap, Trisha, Trina, Christian, Bien & Beth**; brother **Herminio**; sister **Cesaria**; nephews & nieces and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His mortal remains now lie in state at the family residence in San Isidro, Sta. Rita, Pampanga.

Interment will be on December 30, 2006 at 1:30 p.m. after the celebration of the Holy Mass at the Sta. Rita de Cascia Parish Church.

Death Notices

FR. GREGORIO BURT PEREZ DELEÑA III

Died on December 23, 2006 at the age of 44.

His body lies in state at Funeraria Imperial, Naga City.

Interment will be on December 30, 2006 at Sto. Niño Memorial Park, Naga City after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at Peñafrancia Church.

— oOo —

ENCARNACION R. DANTES

of Naga City died on December 25, 2006 at the age of 95.

Her remains lie in state at Funeraria Imperial, Peñafrancia Ave., Naga City.

Interment will be announced later.

— oOo —

IRENEA PUEYO AGUSTIN

of Bañadero, Ozamis City

April 5, 1940 - December 18, 2006

She was laid to rest yesterday, December 27, 2006. Her family wishes to thank friends who comforted them in their hour of bereavement.

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."
Matthew 11:28

ALBINA GANA MADLANSACAY vda. de NARVAEZ

*Peacefully joined our Creator
on 25 December 2006 at the age of 101.*

Her bereaved children **Ester & Pepe Paez, Levy & Chit, Cecilia, Ruth & Jimmy Junio,** and **Jun & Eega**; brother and sisters **Socorro, Patrocinio, Sister Lucina, S.P.C.**, and **Apolinar**; grandchildren and great-grandchildren, nephews and nieces, friends and relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at the family residence at #111 Evangelista St., Poblacion, Bacoor, Cavite.

Interment will be on December 29, 2006, Friday at Bacoor Memorial Park after the 3:00 p.m. Mass.

"Eternal life will swallow up that which can die. God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again."

2 Corinthians 5:4-5

Rosario "Chayong" Reyes Lacson

of Bayan Luma, Imus, Cavite

Peacefully joined our Creator on Sunday,
December 24, 2006 at the age of 91.

Her loving children **Leticia** and **Bernardo Ramos** (†), **Merlita** and **Teodoro Mendoza, Bernardo** and **Cecilia Lacson, Abelardo** and **Belinda Lacson, Conchita** and **Rosauro Amoranto, Flordeliza** and **Salvador Lim, Jr., Teresita** and **Flaviano Legaspi, Myrna** and **Luciano Castillo, Jr., Iderlina** and **Agustin Dabu**; her 18 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Grand Chapel of
La Funeraria Sapinoso at Col. J. Elises St., Imus, Cavite.

Interment will take place on Saturday, December 30, 2006 at the Imus Municipal Cemetery after the 2:15 p.m. Mass at the Imus Cathedral in Imus, Cavite.

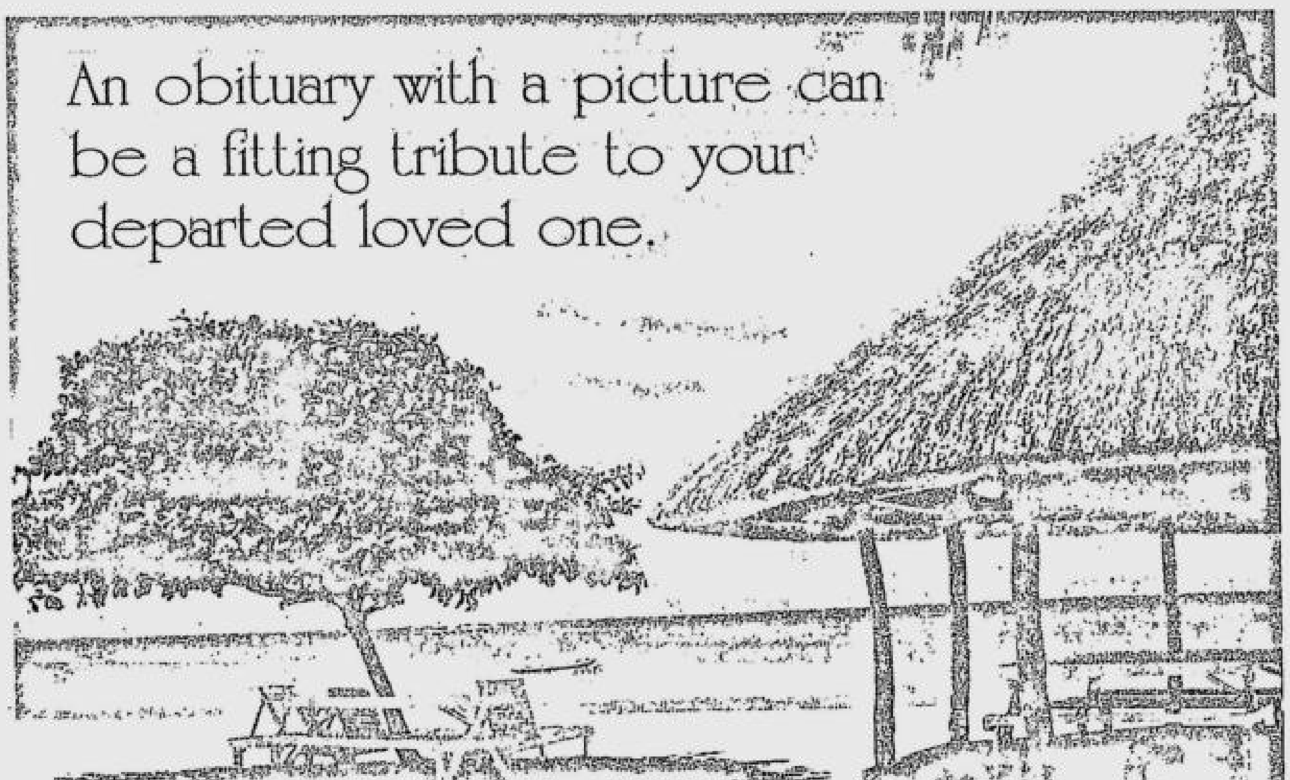
ADELAIDA REBUSE REGERO

*Peacefully joined her Creator and her loving husband Ruckie
on December 18, 2006 at the age of 80.*

She shall be missed by her dearest children **Josefina, Zenaida, Cristencio, Ronnie** and **Ferdinand**; their spouses **Adolfo, Eriberto, Arlene, Gina** and **Rosemarie**; her ever loving grandchildren **Janelle, Joanelle, Johannes, Erickzen, Zabrina, Krissiefey, Kristofeyson, Theron, Zachary, Jullienne, Ronnie Jacob, Aaron, Roxanne, Reggie** and **Rachel**; her sister **Anrica**, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at 150 San Juan St., Burauen, Leyte.

Interment will be on Saturday, December 30, 2006 at the Burauen Cemetery after the celebration of the Holy Eucharist at the Immaculate Concepcion Parish in Burauen, Leyte at 9:00 a.m.



An obituary with a picture can
be a fitting tribute to your
departed loved one.

Always caring...

INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS and bank-to-bank payments.

---

*"God's garden must be beautiful, He only picks the best. And when He saw you sleeping,
so peaceful and free from pain, He could not wish you back to suffer again."*

**TO COMMEMORATE THE
1st Death ANNIVERSARY OF**

CELSO DIZON SEGISMUNDO

(July 28, 1941 to December 28, 2005)

MASSES WILL BE OFFERED FOR THE ETERNAL REPOSE OF HIS SOUL ON WEDNESDAY, 28 DECEMBER 2006 AT THE FOLLOWING CHURCHES:

Our Lady of Beautiful Love – Washington Street, Merville Parañaque	6:00 pm
St. Hannibal Seminary – Calcutta Street, Merville Parañaque	7:00 am
Colegio De San Agustin – Dasmariñas Village, Makati	6:00 am & 12:00 nn
Sanctuario de San Antonio – Forbes Park, Makati	8:00 am & 12:00 nn
Don Bosco Church – Arnaiz Street, Makati	12:00 nn
De La Salle University – Taft Avenue, Manila	12:00 nn
St. Scholastica's College – Leon Guinto Street, Manila	6:00 am
Our Lady of Mount Carmel – Lipa City	9:00 am & 12:00 nn
San Sebastian Cathedral – Lipa City	
St. Joseph's Church – Springfield, Omaha Nebraska U.S.A.	

His loving wife, **Lucy**; children, **Marivic, Junjun & Jane, JV & Isang, Stephen & Mylene** and grandchildren request the relatives, friends, and people whose lives he has touched to offer a prayer for his soul.

His family also conveys sincere appreciation and gratitude to all who sympathized, remember, offer mass and prayers, and keep **Celso** alive in their memories and hearts.

Our Dearly Beloved ***"WILLY"***

WILFRED R. CORD-CRUZ

*Peacefully joined our Lord on December 15, 2006
in California, USA at the age of 42.*

His loving wife, **ANNA LYNN**; children **NICOLE, NEGENE** and **NADINE**; mother **GENIE**; mother-in-law **LITA McCARTHY**; brothers and sisters **JUN, EDGAR** and **PINKEE, ERIC** and **GEN, GRACE, JEANNIE** and **JOHN SORIANO**; nieces and nephews **IVANA**; **ERIKA** and **KERRICK**; **JANINA, JIAN** and **JIANA** and all his relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains will lie in state at the Chapel of the Risen Lord, Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish (Twin Hearts), West Triangle, Quezon City from 1 p.m. on December 31, 2006 to January 3, 2007.

Cremation will follow after the 9 a.m. Holy Mass on January 3, 2007.

**The Board of Directors, Members, Management and Staff
of Manila Golf & Country Club**

announce with deep regret the demise of

RAMON B. SALAZAR

(General Manager)

on December 27, 2006 at the age of 43.

His wife, Sharon; children Joshua, Camille and Daniel; brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces, friends and relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Loyola Chapel, Guadalupe.

Cremation will be on December 30, 2006 at 9:00 a.m.

For your Classified and Obituary Ads please call:

Inquirer SM Megamall Branch

635-0219 • 637-2008

BUSINESS

US looks for new sources of RP mangoes

USDA to inspect provinces in Luzon, Visayas

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE will inspect provinces in Luzon that could be developed into primary sources of mangoes to be exported to the US, according to an official from the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Plant Industry.

BPI quarantine officer Hernani Golez said USDA representatives were scheduled to start the inspection of all provinces in Luzon in the first quarter next year.

The study is expected to take more than six months to complete, and USDA is expected to conduct a similar inspection in the Visayas.

The US government requires the inspection before it allows the entry of Philippine fresh mangoes.

The US government currently allows the entry of mangoes from big mango producing provinces, such as Zambales and Cebu, but only to Guam and Hawaii.

Only mangoes grown in Guimaras are allowed to enter the US mainland.

The mangoes must be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate issued by the DA that says that the fruits had been treated for fruit flies.

Mangoes originating from Guimaras must also contain an additional declaration stating that they were grown on the island.

Golez, meanwhile, said that the DA was looking into the possibility of again shouldering part of the cost of the inspection of the orchards by the USDA incurred by local mango producers.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap had expressed his openness to the possibility of again implementing the cost-sharing scheme.

"This will be a big boost to the industry," said Yap, who noted that producers who have to ship mangoes to the United States had to contend with spiraling freight costs.

He said mango producers currently shoulder the entire inspection fee of $3.75 per carton of fresh mangoes.

The government inspection subsidy, which has been suspended since the time of former Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr., was expected to make the price of mangoes from the Philippines more competitive.

The Philippines' mango exports totaled $46.17 million in 2005, with exports to China reaching $2.85 million during the same period.

Your $ can earn more with PSBank's HIGHER RATES

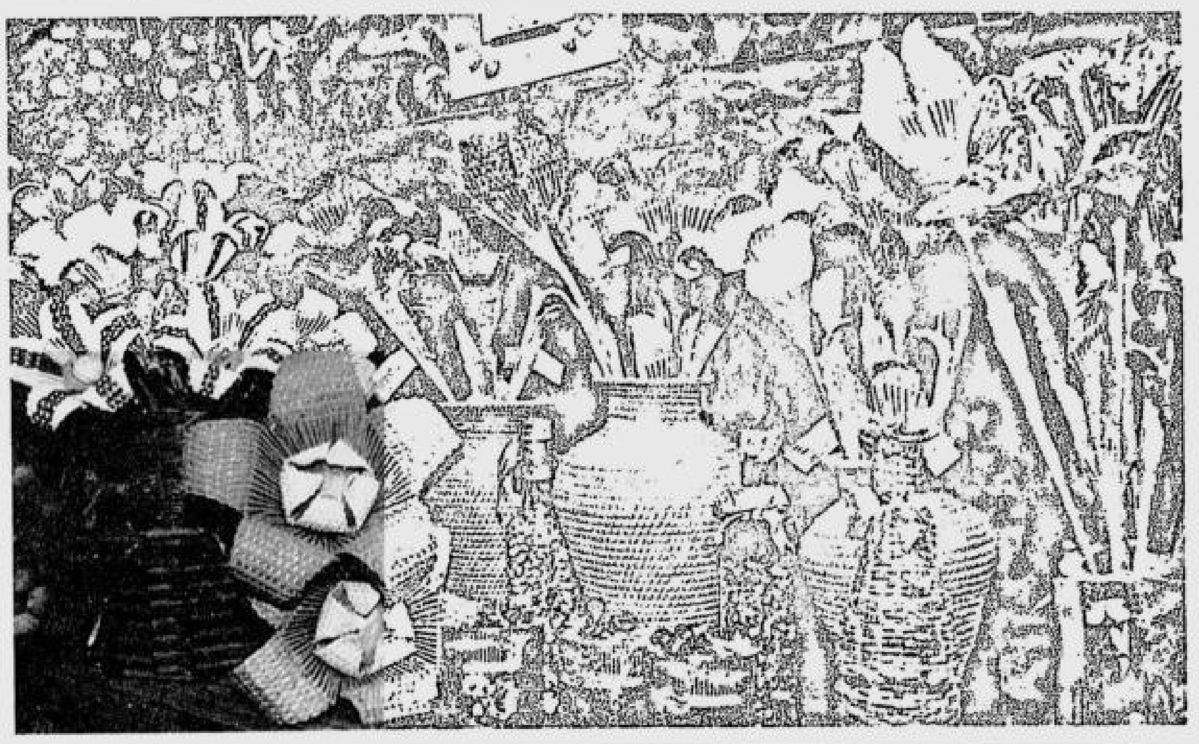
	$1,000 to 9,999	$10,000 to 49,999	$50,000 to 99,999	$100,000 and up
1 month	3.50%	3.50%	3.63%	3.75%
2 months	3.50%	3.63%	3.75%	3.88%
3 months	3.63%	3.75%	3.75%	3.88%
6 months	3.75%	3.88%	3.88%	4.00%
12 months	3.88%	4.00%	4.13%	4.25%

**Quoted rates are subject to change without prior notice.
Rates are on per annum basis and subject to 7.5% withholding tax

Open an account now at any PSBank branch nationwide!

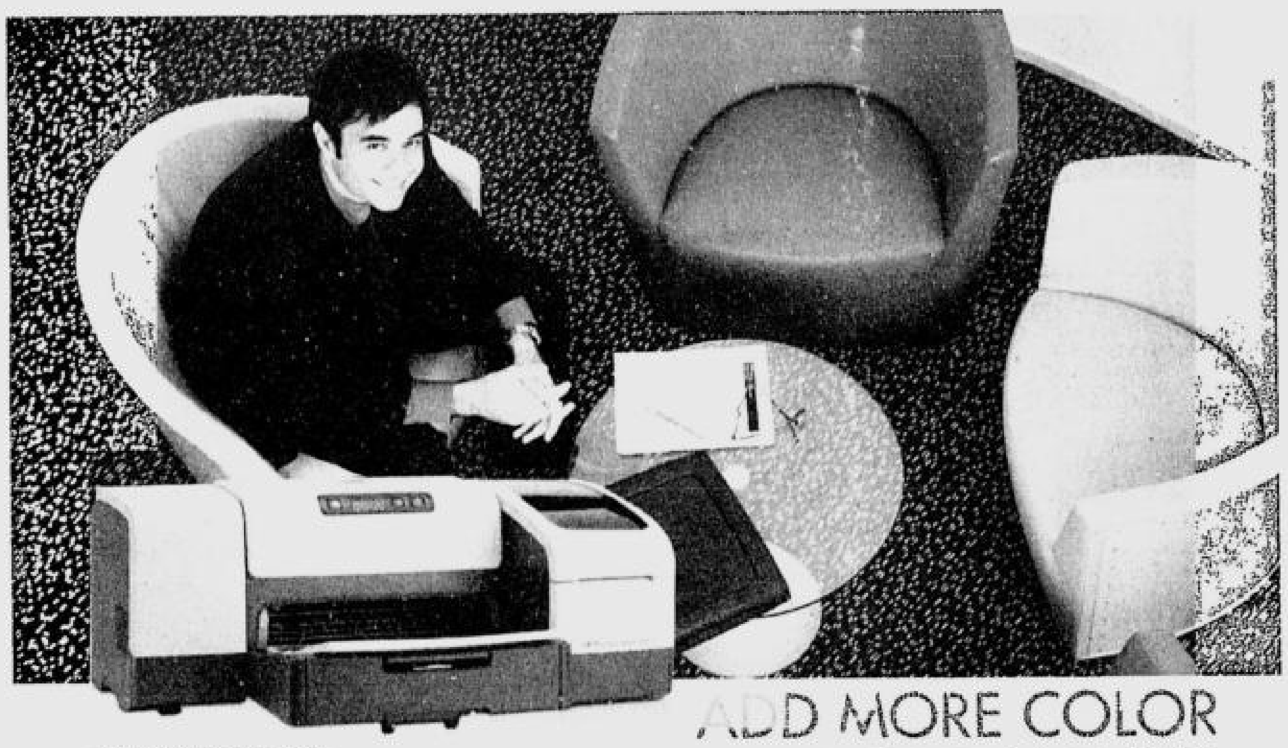
PSBank US Dollar TIME DEPOSIT

Text PSBANK USTD <your name> <landline no.> <email address> then send to 391-772 for Smart or 0917-8902327 for Globe and other networks.
Member of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation. Maximum deposit insurance for each depositor P250,000



COLORFUL CELEBRATION Recycled materials are transformed into works of art during the recent fiesta celebration of Urdaneta City, Pangasinan. The city kicked off its one barangay, one product campaign to bring out entrepreneurial spirit of the residents.

RAY B. ZAMBRANO/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON



HP BUSINESS INKJET 1000 PRINTER
P8,690
- Breakthrough productivity and brillant results with low cost per page black text printing
- Top quality and speed comparable to a laser printer
  - Up to 23ppm (black) or 18ppm (colour)
- 4 individual ink tanks and long life printheads
- Up to 4800 x 1200 optimised dpi colour printing¹

ADD MORE COLOR TO YOUR BUSINESS WITH A FREE PHOTO PRINTER

Get a free HP Photosmart A310 Compact Photo Printer when you buy an HP Business Inkjet 1000 Printer. Equipped with 4 individual high-capacity and economical ink cartridges, the HP Business Inkjet 1000 Printer lets you save on your printing costs. Now you don't have to throw away unused ink. Get even 21% lower cost per page compared to a mono laser printer**. It prints fast with a speed of 23 ppm for black making you more productive. Not only that, a monthly duty cycle of 6,250 pages makes it more reliable. Enjoy sharper prints with up to 4800x1200 optimized color printing. So hurry, this nationwide promotion runs from December 22 until February 28, 2007 only.

Suggested Retail Price Php 4,999

vivera HP INKS
Brilliant, Enduring Color

See your HP retailer today.

HP Dial-a-cartridge 1800 1 441 6688 doorstep delivery

1-800-1441-6688
or (632) 867-3557
ph.contact@hp.com

hp invent

spencerLAB www.spencerlab.com

**Tests conducted by the independent research company SpencerLab Digital Color Laboratory showed the cost of ink when printing with the high capacity individual ink cartridges, as used in the HP Business Inkjet 1000 printer, may be as much as 21 percent less than the cost of toner when printing with a black-and-white laser printer. Pricing based upon US currency. For more information, go to www.spencerlab.com This study was commissioned by HP.

©2006 Hewlett-Packard Development Company, L.P. Prices are subject to change without prior notice. ¹Up to 4800 x 1200-optimized dpi colour when printing from a computer and 1200-input dpi. ²Approximate figures. Exact speed depends on system configuration, software programs and document complexity. The HP Contact Center is available Mondays thru Fridays 8.30a.m. to 5:30p.m.

PARTICIPATING RESELLERS: HP HOME & BUSINESS CENTER (Glorietta) - 752-8821 • HP STORE MALL OF ASIA - 556-0194 • HP Store SM Cebu - 032 412 0688 • Accent Micro - 634-2438, 771-0779 • Complink - 801-9902/08, 920 9140/41 • Electroworld 927-0518, 813 6154 • PC WORX GILMORE - 413-4848 • Silicon Valley - 633-1723/24, 812-6734 The Computer Authority (TCA) - 634-2437, 850-3709 • Wilman - 683-0532, 926-7322 • Nganus IT HUB (Cebu) 032 232 5355, 032 412 0068

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5557 Series of 2006

Land Bank widens lending window for Davao SMEs

By Rizalene Acac
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—THE LAND BANK OF THE Philippines (LBP) in the Davao Region is expanding its lending window to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that are into export and high-value crop production.

Joselito Gutierrez, LBP vice president for Davao region, said that while he could not ascertain the loan portfolio for SMEs next year, the bank was ready to extend loans to qualified SMEs.

Gutierrez said the bank also plans to engage in an overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) program.

But he said LBP would package it with other products, including loan offering that would enable OFWs to become entrepreneurs.

He said this would help OFWs to invest in worthy endeavors so that the money they have worked for so hard would not go to waste.

"It will start in January," Gutierrez said of the program. "It could include predeparture loans and placement fees."

For 2006, LBP was able to lend P42 million to SMEs in Davao region, Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Sur. The figure was 1.08 percent higher than the P39 million lent in 2005.

The bank this year disbursed 70 percent of its loan portfolio worth P3.7 billion to agriculture and agrarian projects—an increase of P400 million compared to the previous year.

In the year-end accomplishment report, bank officials said that the farming and fisheries sectors also got a loan share of P1.41 billion, which is 1.28 percent higher than last year. The loans benefited 95,799 farmers and fisherfolk.

LBP also approved P1.46 billion worth of loans to various local government units in the region. It was 1.23 percent higher than last year's P1.19 billion.

In total, the bank has an outstanding loan portfolio of P4.1 billion for this year from P3.79 billion in 2005.

Gutierrez said they also used conduits such as rural and thrift banks and private companies to service SMEs.

He said there were 28 rural banks in the region, with 24 having an active relationship with LBP.

Benguet's vegetable farmers junk free trade

By Delmar Cariño
Inquirer Northern Luzon

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—THE GOVERNMENT'S move to liberalize imports, including vegetables, is expected to meet fierce resistance from farmers in the province, who all fear that the policy will spell doom for the local vegetable industry.

Jose Andiso Sr., president of the Benguet Farmers Federation Inc. (BFFI), said the move to lower tariffs and remove import quotas to give foreign vegetables wider access to the local market had become a bitter pill to swallow.

The farmers, he said, were willing to leave their farms and protest.

The pest risk analysis (PRA) for Chinese carrots—the first vegetable supposed to enjoy local market access under a bilateral trade pact that the country signed with China—appeared to be the test case of the farmers' resolve to junk free trade.

The PRA is a disease and pest management system for imported vegetables that should be approved by vegetable industry stakeholders before it is incorporated in a protocol on quarantine conditions for vegetable importation.

Since 2004, PRA consultations on carrots were met with the farmers' refusal to view the PRA as a scientific measure to protect the local vegetable industry from foreign pests and diseases.

During a nationwide consultation for stakeholders of the carrot trade on Dec. 6 in Quezon City, the farmers said they would protest any move to allow carrot importation.

Chinese carrots were the first vegetables that underwent a PRA.

The PRA's approval would pave way for other PRAs to be conducted on nine other vegetables China wanted to sell to the country—potatoes, ginger, broccoli, cabbage, lettuce, lotus root, sweet pea, kalian tsai (a type of pechay) and celery.

Jerome Bunyi, a World Trade Organization (WTO) expert in the Department of Agriculture's policy research and services division, said the PRA must be understood in the context of free trade and globalization.

"It is a mechanism designed to avert the unabated entry of volumes of foreign vegetables into the local markets," he said.

The country's trade officials signed in April 2004 the early harvest program (EHP) under the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation of Southeast Asian Nations and the People's Republic of China.

The cooperation, which aimed to establish a China-Asean free trade zone by 2010, wanted to give members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations low tariff entry privileges for its products to China in preparation for a full free trade system on condition that Asean markets open their markets to Chinese products.

Former Trade Secretary Juan Santos said the Philippine-China EHP covered 209 tariff lines that included marine, animal and plant products.

The farmers, however, viewed the signing of the EHP as hasty and adverse to the local vegetable industry.

"We were not consulted on this EHP. It was as if our officials had sold us," said farmer Bernard Paleng of Kibungan town.

Patricio Ananayo, head of the regional Department of Agriculture's agribusiness marketing and assistance services, said the Cordillera would stand to lose P5.28 billion worth of carrots a year if Chinese carrots will enter the market.

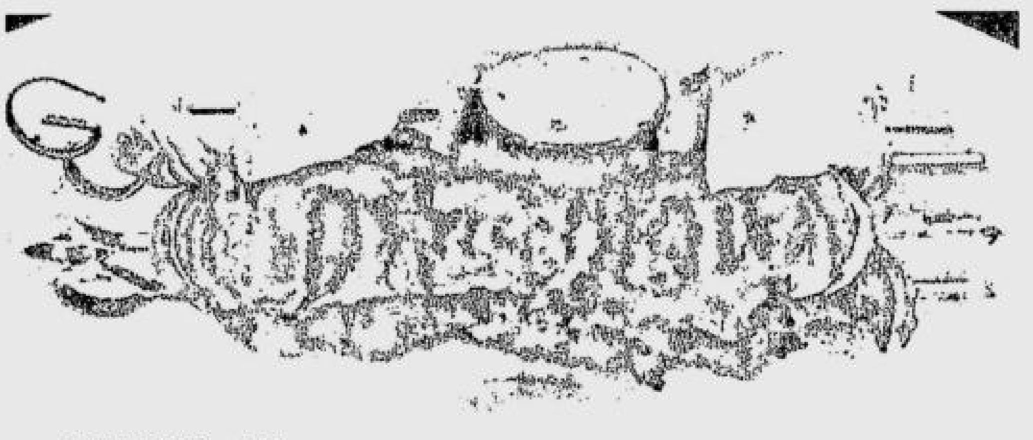
LIFESTYLE

Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart)
or email us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

WEDNESDAY 2BU ◉ THURSDAY FOOD

Mönmilk Pure, Natural and Tasty
Mönmilk PURE MILK
AVAILABLE AT LEADING SUPERMARKETS NATIONWIDE


CHICKEN Souvlaki

Something Greek for New Year

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Roger Carpio

CELEBRATE THE NEW YEAR WITH SOMEthing hot, healthy and Greek!

Chicken Souvlaki is likely to be a hit with Filipinos who love to grill or broil during festivities. The popular Greek food consists of small pieces of meat and sometimes vegetables grilled on a skewer.

Traditionally, Greek *souvlaki* uses lamb, but you can also make it with chicken as in this recipe from chef Jeremiah G. of Mati Restaurant (G/F, Power Plant Mall, Rockwell Center, Makati; tels. 8982506 and 8976284). Chicken Souvlaki is one of Mati's bestsellers.

"Filipinos love to barbecue. Chicken Souvlaki can add spice to their celebrations," says Go, who studied in Switzerland and trained in Greece. "Greek cuisine is very simple and direct. Its nutritional and aesthetic value lies in the ingredients."

Go uses chicken breasts cut diagonally to make them look bigger and chunkier after grilling. They are also easier to skewer.

Metal skewers are used for this recipe. If you want to use bamboo sticks, soak them in water for at least 30 minutes before using so they won't scorch easily.

For the marinade, Go adds olive oil, a regular feature of Greek cuisine. "Extra-virgin olive oil gives the meat more flavor and a longer shelf life, and makes it moist," says Go.

Skewer together onion-chicken-bell pepper-chicken-onion. You can also use different colors of peppers—red, green, yellow etc.

Chicken Souvlaki is best eaten with bread or as a companion dish to a Greek salad of chunked tomatoes, cucumber, red onion and feta cheese.

STEP BY STEP

Ingredients

500 g chicken breast, cut into 1"x1" cubes, 15 g each

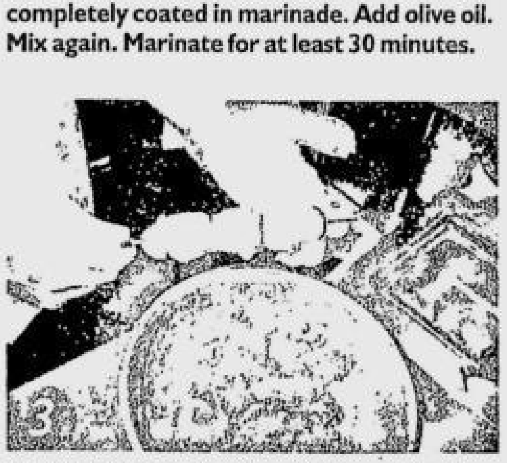
Marinade:
2 tbsp tomato paste
1 tsp chopped garlic
1 tsp oregano
1 tsp sea salt/kosher salt
½ tsp ground black pepper
90 ml extra-virgin olive oil

Assembly:
Green bell pepper, quartered
Onions, quartered

For suggestions, e-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

MARINATE chicken in tomato paste, salt, oregano, garlic and ground pepper.

MIX well, making sure the meat is completely coated in marinade. Add olive oil. Mix again. Marinate for at least 30 minutes.


SKEWER pieces of onion, chicken and bell pepper alternately.

GRILL on high heat until chicken is a bit oily. Turn to brown all sides and occasionally baste with marinade. Transfer to a platter and serve with lemon wedges, grilled eggplants or grilled zucchini.

And to think this would not have
possible without the tireless
Master Danongan Kalanduy
effortlessly playing his ku
to see, paving the way fo
the now and into the futu
these traditions that co
lost forever.

Riveting. It's a wor
characterize som
captivating, motivat
which elucidates a d
Velasco and mez
Mitchell-Velasco
Evening of Phili
Classics" at 7:30
FilCom Center in

Joel Espiritu No
International Voic
and Philippine n
Mitchell-Velasc
York's Lieder
competition.

The program is
spirit of adven
lands in searc
amazing th
synthesizer
implements

This is a
companies
music o

It is an i
publishi
Filipino
Filipino
experim
state of
Grace
Buto
electro
unique
This
traditional porary Hawaiian
music where ide in Santa Cruz
County in ern California.

The band members consist of Grandpa Allen, 72, a retired pastor from the big island of Kailua-Kona Hawaii, his son Michael, and Michael's children Leilani,
The band is named

Theater located in
District, San Francisco.

It was a thrilling, if not exhilarating experience, sitting in the front row with cameras blinking and camcorders rolling, all the while watching the percussionists and dancers do their thing.

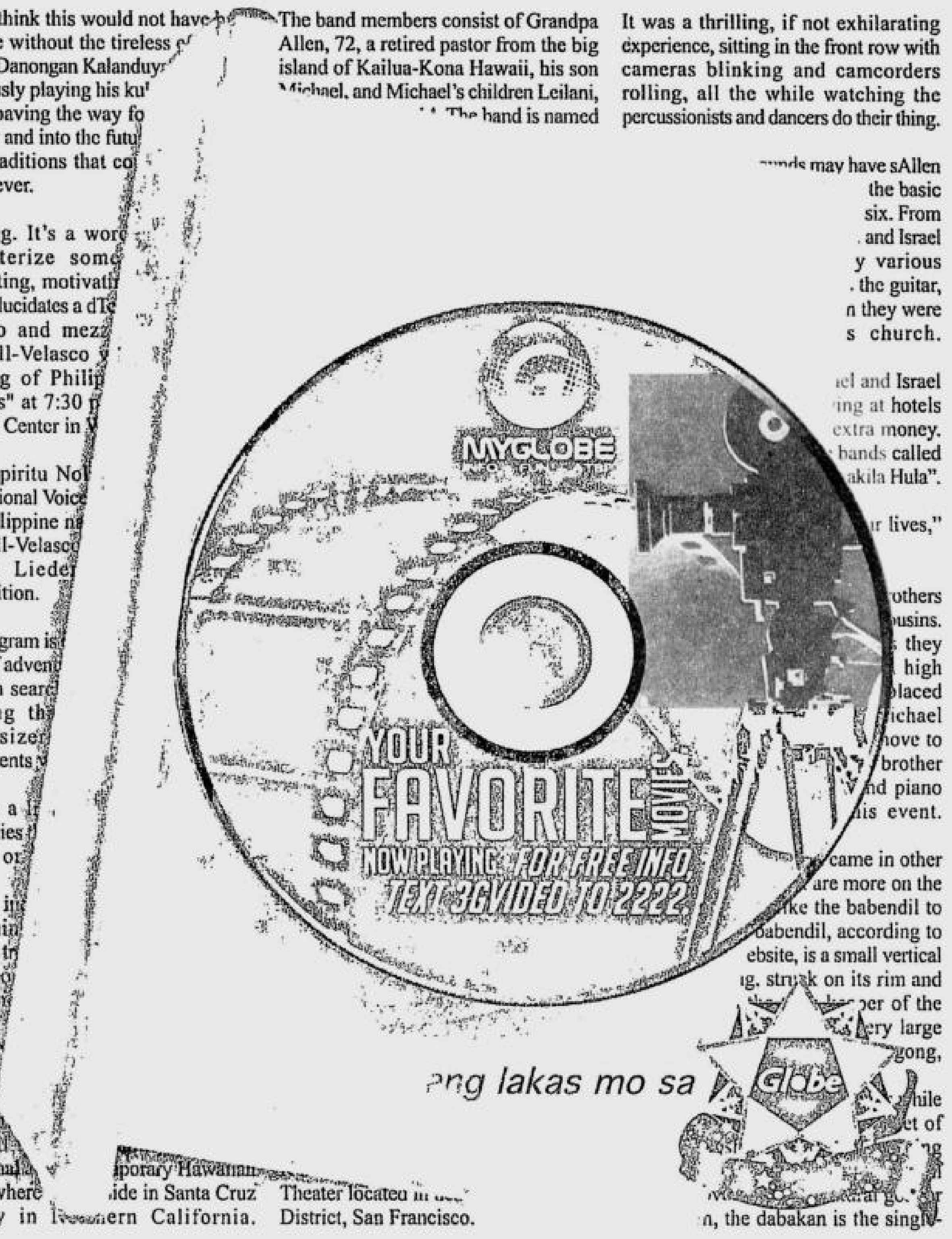
may have sAllen
the basic
six. From
and Israel
y various
the guitar,
n they were
s church.

el and Israel
ing at hotels
extra money.
bands called
akila Hula".

r lives,"

others
usins.
they
high
laced
ichael
ove to
brother
nd piano
is event.

came in other
are more on the
ke the babendil to
babendil, according to
ebsite, is a small vertical
g. struck on its rim and
per of the
ery large
gong,
hile
t of
n, the dabakan is the single-


MYGLOBE
YOUR FAVORITE MOVIES
NOW PLAYING. FOR FREE INFO TEXT 3GVIDEO TO 2222
ng lakas mo sa Globe

SLIMMERS WORLD
GREAT BODIES. GREAT SKIN.
BUY 1 MONTH GET 1 MONTH FREE!!! FOR ENROLLEES TODAY!
TO GET YOU STARTED
FREE! TRIAL PERSONAL TRAINING
ALL THE LATEST AEROBICS!
GREAT BODIES WINNER CARLOS MORALES Lost 26 lbs.
GREAT BODIES WINNER KAREN VILLANUEVA Lost 32 lbs.
NO JOINING FEES! CREDIT CARD OPTION AT 0%

SAVE TODAY! FOR FIRST 25 ENROLLEES
BUY 15 TREATMENTS GET 15 FREE

Introducing ENDOSLIM
An effective way of shaping your body and reducing the appearance of cellulite. The gentle suction combined with the action of the motorized rollers lift and roll the skin, thereby stimulating the venous and lymphatic systems. As a result, toxins and abnormal fluid retention is eliminated from the body.

HOT MASQUE For firming and inch loss
MESO REJUVENATION Skin renewed, reborn & refreshed

MESOTHERAPY
The latest technology in slimming & firming from Europe...

Diamond Ultrapeel is Skin Resurfacing
Resurfacing is a wonderful alternative to laser or chemical peels because it is non-invasive, non-surgical & requires no down time after treatment.
- Sun damaged skin
- Age spots
- Reduction of early aging fine lines
- Blending of cosmetic surgery or laser treatments
- Reduction of acne scarring
- Extraction of blackheads and whiteheads
- Minor scar revision
- Hyperpigmentation reduction

LOSE 16 INCHES IN ONLY 60 MINUTES AND ALL YOUR CELLULITES WITH
BODY METRICS
LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP. 0% INTEREST! NO MONTHLY DUES! NO JOINING FEES!

CALL US: 536-3333 FITNESS & SKIN HOTLINE
www.slimmersworld.com.ph
inquire@slimmersworld.com.ph
MOBILE NUMBER 091-SLIMMERS (75466377)

ALABANG	BINONDO	CALOOCAN	CEBU	GREENHILLS	LEGASPI VILL.	MALATE	MEGAMALL	PASAY ROAD	PASIG	SM NORTH	SUBIC	TRAFALGAR
Gemma / Mylene	Amir / Jaimmee	Roda / Olive	Juna	Anna	Lani / Dianne	Daisy / Mhaya	Ruby / Toni	Vai / Kristy	Abbie	Mitch	Beth / Precy	Emily
2F RCBC Bldg. Zapote alabang Rd.	F Regina Garden II	6F Panorama Bldg. Rizal Ave.	Basement 1 & 2 Ayala Center	27F Atlanta Ctr. #31 Anapolis	GF Zeta Bldg. Salcedo St.	6F Adriatico Square Adriatico Manila	2F Bldg. A Mandaluyong	1032 Arnaiz Ave. cor. Hernandez St.	Restaurant Ave. Marcos Hi-way	2F Annex Bldg. Quezon City	2F Times Square Rizal Hi-way	28F Trafalgar Plaza H.V. Dela Costa
809 03 96	242 13 12	365 76 53	231 32 54	726 65 05	893 89 35	536 06 19	631 38 69	887 13 35	681 53 33	929 64 29	252 65 14	814 01 38

SKIN CENTER: ALABANG 775 05 87 / 0918 391 25 10 BINONDO 2422 07 28 / 0917 822 43 99 CALOOCAN 365 76 53 GREENHILLS 726 15 26 / 0919 498 61 96 MALATE 525 98 91 / 0921 317 34 15
MEGAMALL 637 75 43 / 0916 247 97 53 PASAY ROAD 887 35 30 / 0915 689 30 88 PASIG 647 38 16 / 0915 309 46 23

New Ortigas hotel opens with a nine-course gala dinner

Photos by Rudy Esperas

QC TREASURER Vic Endriga, Mayor Sonny Belmonte and Paul Rene Lee, general manager of Crowne Plaza, during the ribbon-cutting ceremony

QUEZON CITY MAYOR SONNY Belmonte cut the ceremonial ribbon that formally opened recently the new Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila hotel in Ortigas.

He was assisted by QC treasurer Vic Endriga and Paul Rene Lee, the hotel's general manager.

The glittering launch was attended by diplomats, government officials and other well-known personalities.

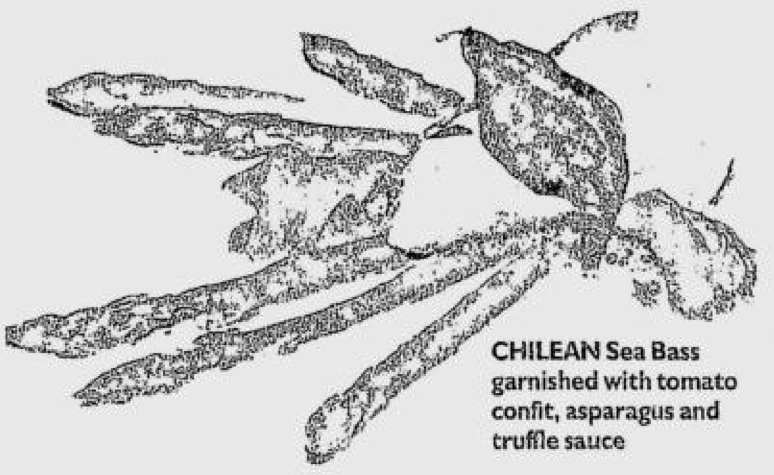
Hotel executives welcomed the guests while a flutist played in the background.

With Johnny Litton as master of ceremonies, the program included speeches by InterContinental Hotels' chief operating officer for Southern Asia Jan Smits; video greetings from Lance Gokongwei, president and chief operating officer of JG Summit Group; and Frederick Go, president of Robinsons Land Corp.

Lee, also regional general manager of InterContinental Hotels Philippines, welcomed the guests and led the opening toast before dinner.

French executive chef Cyrille Soenen prepared a special nine-course gala dinner that included a hot appetizer of oyster served with horseradish cream, lobster bisque lollipop in Kaffir lime sauce and cucumber mint soup with crispy smoked *bangus* belly. Next came the cold amuse bouclé of stuffed sardines with goat cheese, cream of corn soup with chorizos cappuccino and duck liver royal flan with port wine. Main appetizer was marble of duck liver and duck breast terrine in tangy mango sauce, served with crisp *unagi* bread.

Soup was mussels with cappuccino of *uni* served with seaweed bread. It was followed by two main courses—Chilean Sea Bass garnished with tomato confit, asparagus and truffle sauce, paired with white wine; and Beef Tournedos served with stuffed braised potatoes, mushrooms and vegetable casserole in red wine sauce, paired with red wine.


CHILEAN Sea Bass garnished with tomato confit, asparagus and truffle sauce

The three-course dessert began with a platter of vanilla caneles, *ube* marshmallows, banana financier and mango macaroons, followed by the main dessert of strawberry, lime and basilica sherbet; mint-frosted warm velvet chocolat, and then, after dinner, assorted pralines, coffee and tea.

The dinner show opened with a classical ballet number from members of Ballet Philippines, Ballet Manila and the University of the Philippines Performing Arts group. It was followed by a 30-minute performance by Jenine Desiderio and a one-hour concert by Bimbo Cerrudo with the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO).

Finale was a dance number by Teatro Pacita and a classical musical medley by Cerrudo and the MPO.

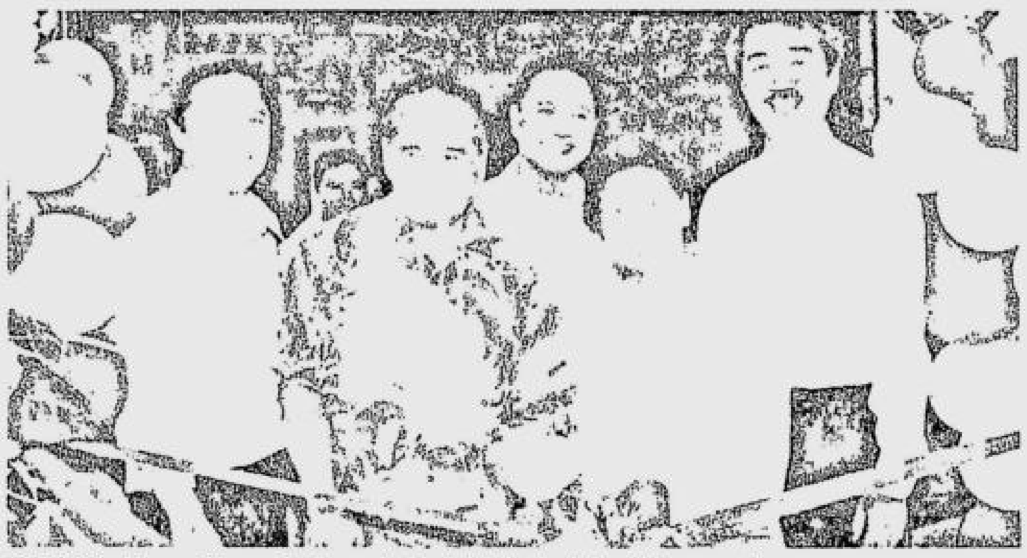
Highlight of the evening was a raffle, with a round-trip ticket for two on Cebu Pacific to Singapore, with accommodations at the presidential suite of InterContinental Hotel Singapore. Winner of the grand prize was Elizabeth Campos.

The Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila (tel. 6337222) is at the corner of Ortigas and Asian Development Bank Avenues in Quezon City. It is a member of the worlds' largest hotel chain, InterContinental Hotels Group.

INTERCONTINENTAL Hotels' chief operating officer for Southern Asia Jan Smits and regional VP-Southern Asia Jolyon Bulley flank John Gokongwei, JG Summit chair emeritus.

INQUIRER publisher Isagani Yambot (left) and Ambassador and Ms Peter Beckingham of the United Kingdom with Crowne Plaza executives

LANCE Gokongwei, president and chief operating officer of JG Summit Group


GUESTS of honor Henry Sy Sr. and wife Felicidad led the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Tagaytay steakhouse now in Manila

THE RESTAURANT OFTEN DESCRIBED AS the premiere destination for premium steaks in Tagaytay is now at SM Mall of Asia.

Tagaytay Highlands Steakhouse opened recently with a charity dinner for the benefit of Pondo ng Pinoy Community Foundation, an organization conceived by the Archbishop of Manila, Most Reverend Gaudencio B. Rosales.

The Highlands Steakhouse is renowned for its servings such as the US Black Angus Rib Eye Steak, which comes with the customary salt and pepper spicing, fresh veggies and creamy mashed potato.

For the Mall of Asia launch, chef Robert J. Bolaños, Highlands executive chef, paraded a very impressive menu made up of appetizers that included Hot Oysters with a Parmesan Crisp Crust, Oyster Shooters, Foie Gras and Potato Melba. The soup and salad combination was made up of Mango Vinaigrette on Organic Greens and Butternut Squash Espresso. For the main course, the choices were Pan Grilled Chilean Sea Bass with Wakame Broth and Miso Glazed Vegetables or Roasted US Angus Rib Eye with Potato, Carrot and Green Pea Risotto. Dessert was Banana Crème Brulée Torte with Rum Chocolate Anglaise.

Pondo ng Pinoy has become very close to the heart of Felicidad T. Sy, wife of SM patriarch Henry Sy Sr. A Board of Trustees composed of distinguished lay leaders, bishops, priests and the religious administers the foundation. The Roman Catholic Church serves as its initiator, promoter and steward.

During the dinner-launch, Mrs. Sy received from the Highlands Gourmet Specialist Corp. (HGSC) a certificate of donation pledging 10 percent of the total revenue generated from the charity dinner to Pondo ng Pinoy.

GERALDINE Ocier and Crispy Laurel; (standing) Willy Ocier and Arsenic Laurel

Those who attended the charity dinner included investors of HGSC, namely, Mr. and Mrs. Ceasar Lanuza Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Francisco del Rosario Jr., Hans Sy, J. Roberto Delgado, Leonardo de Ocampo, Edison Cham, Edward Tio, Ricky Dee, Jacinto Ng Jr., lawyer Mario Oreta, Nelson de Villa, Roger Cabuñag, Willy Ocier and Jerry Tiu.

Also present were the Belle Corp. board of directors, club members and club managers. The guests were all given souvenir mugs in the shape of cowboy boots, with the traditional Highlands Steakhouse logo.

Aside from its unforgettable cuisine, Highlands Steakhouse provides diners with a spectacular view of Manila Bay and its famous sunset.

Highlands Steakhouse (tels. 5560768 and 5560769) is located at 2/F, North Wing, Entertainment Mall, SM Mall of Asia, Bay Blvd., Pasay City.

HENRY Sy Sr., Felicidad Sy, Lucio Tan and friends

Evenings of wine and good food

GREENBELT PRESENTED RECENTLY Wine Evenings that offered an eclectic selection of dishes from various food establishments.

Each dish was chosen to complement the world-class wines served like Beringer Pinot Grigio, Stone Cellar Chardonnay, Beringer White Zinfandel, Stone Cellar Merlot, and Stone Cellar Cabernet Sauvignon at Temple Bar hosted by Kathy Yao-Santos of Happy Living Philippines Corp.

Sally Zanirato of Silver Secrets brought Italian wines at Segafredo while Awee Ramirez of Premiere Wines offered Tempranillo 2003, Tinto Reserva 2000 and Gran Reserva 1998 from Spain at Casa Armas.

Australian wines Hanging Rock Chardonnay '04, Heartland Stickleback White '03 and '04, Denkin Chardonnay '05, Cockfighter's Ghost Firestick Chardonnay '03, and St. Clair Vicar's Choice '05 were introduced by Lester Harvey of Zen Asia at Pasha. Ending the series was Wine 101, conducted by Jojo Madrid of Premium Wines at Pepato.

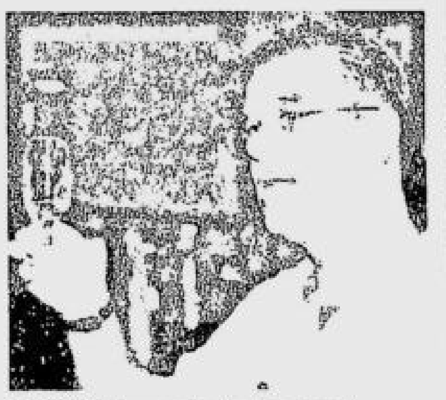
Here are some pointers on how to taste wines:

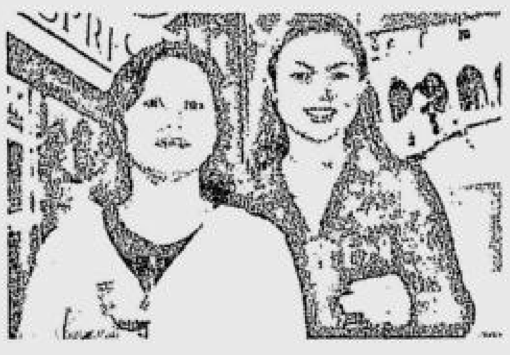
Look. You can tell much about a wine simply by studying its appearance. More color in a white wine usually indicates more flavor and age, while red wines range from pale red to deep brown red, usually becoming lighter in color as they age.

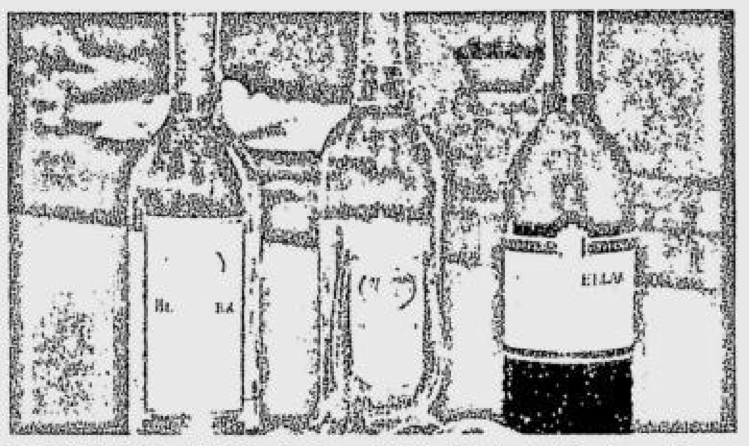
Smell. Swirl your wine to release the molecules that allow you to smell the wine's aroma, also called the bouquet or nose. Sit back, relax, and take one deep whiff.

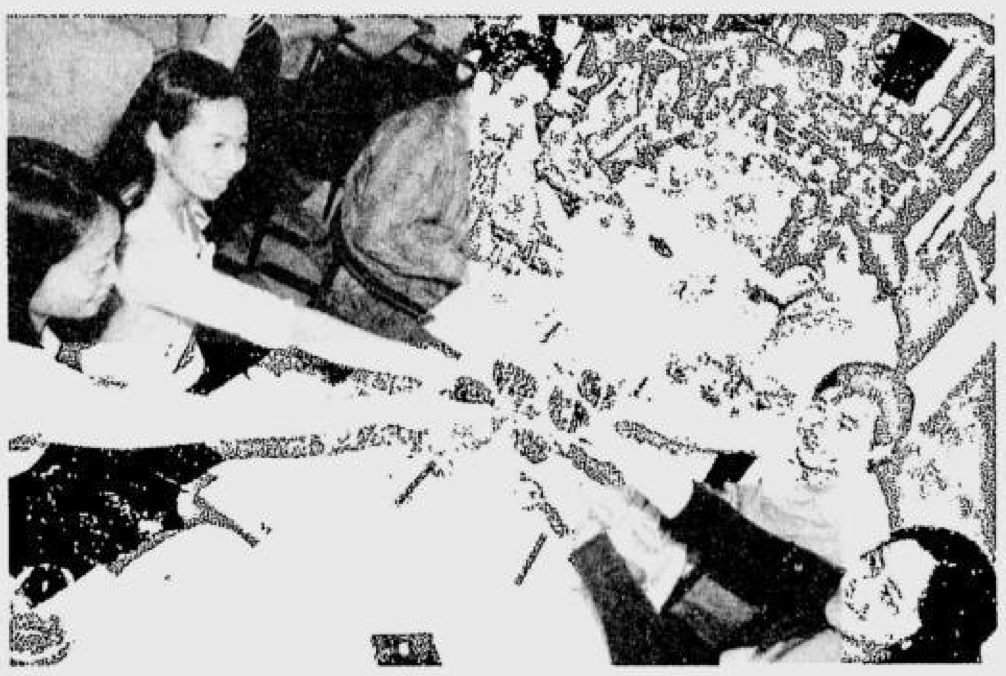
Taste. The most important quality of a wine is its balance between sweetness and acidity. To get the most out of your taste buds, swish the wine around your mouth when tasting wine. This will allow your taste buds and your sense of smell to discern the wines' delicate and subtle flavors.

JOJO Madrid hosts the wine evening at Pepato.

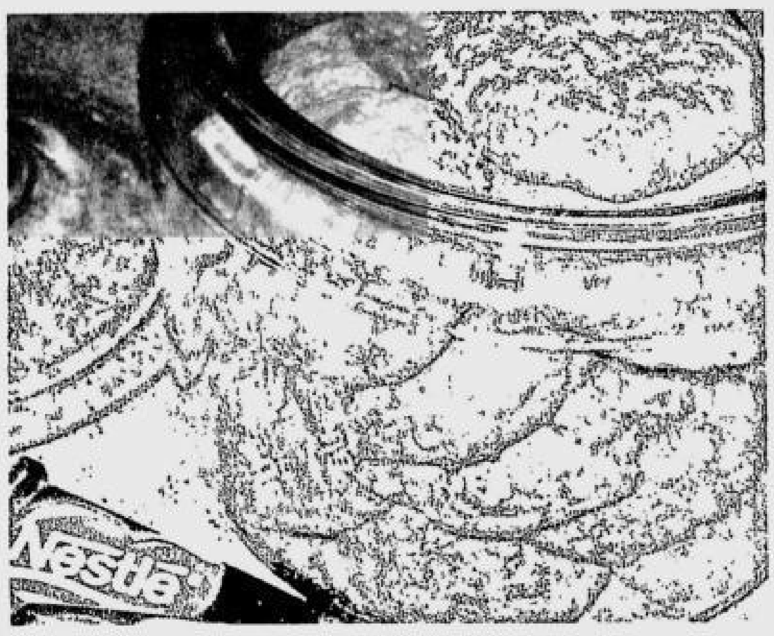

LESTER Harvey hosts the event at Pasha.


SALLY Zanirato and Maxine Chua, marketing manager of Segafredo

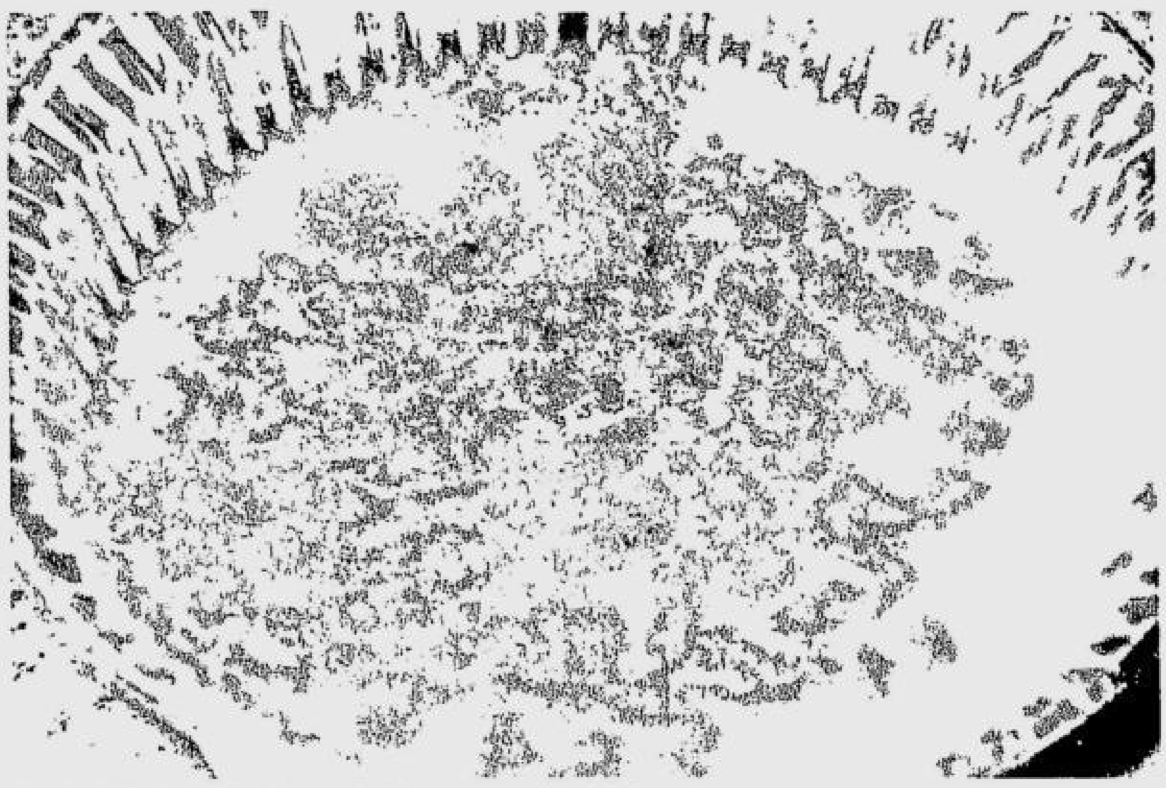

BERINGER Pinot Grigio, Beringer White Zinfandel, Beringer Stone Cellar Chardonnay


WINE enthusiasts enjoy a night of music and good wines from Ayala Malls.

Midnight cookies and morning scones



CHOCOLATE Midnight Cookies with Nestlé Dark Chocolate



COCONUT Crème Brulee torched for a caramelized finish

FOOD WRITER LORI Baltazar held a special baking demo, Tea Party Treats, for Nestlé Club members and another for readers of her food blog www.dessertcomesfirst.blogspot.com.

As guest at the Julius Maggi Kitchen (JMK), Baltazar prepared recipes using Carnation and Nestlé Creams.

Saturday Morning Scones

3 c all-purpose flour
1/3 c sugar
2 ½ tsps baking powder
½ tsp baking soda
¾ tsp salt
6-oz (or ¾ c) cold butter, cut into small pieces

Buttermilk substitute:
½ c Carnation Coco Evap
½ c Nestlé Fresh Milk
1 tbsp vinegar

Preheat oven to 425°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a medium bowl, stir together the flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Add the cold butter pieces using you fingers (preferred method).

Do not worry about large pieces of butter remaining, they will add to the scone's flakiness.

Slowly—and carefully as you might not need all the liquid—pour in 1 c buttermilk mixture. The resulting dough will be soft and just barely holding together.

Transfer the dough onto a floured surface, a Silpat mat or the prepared baling sheet. Knead the dough gently until it holds together—a dozen turns should do. Use a soft hand or else the scones will be tough.

Using a rolling pin or your hands, roll out/flatten the dough into a circle with the desired thickness. With a bench scraper or long knife, cut the circle into six to eight triangles.

At this point, you can brush the scones with some melted butter and/or drizzle them with some sugar, although this is optional.

Bake the scones for 12-17 minutes—baking time will depend on how big and thick your scones are. The scones are done when they are lightly golden on top and are firm when pressed. Let cool briefly and serve warm.

Variations:

Chocolate Chip Scones

Add ½ c miniature chocolate chips into the dough before kneading.

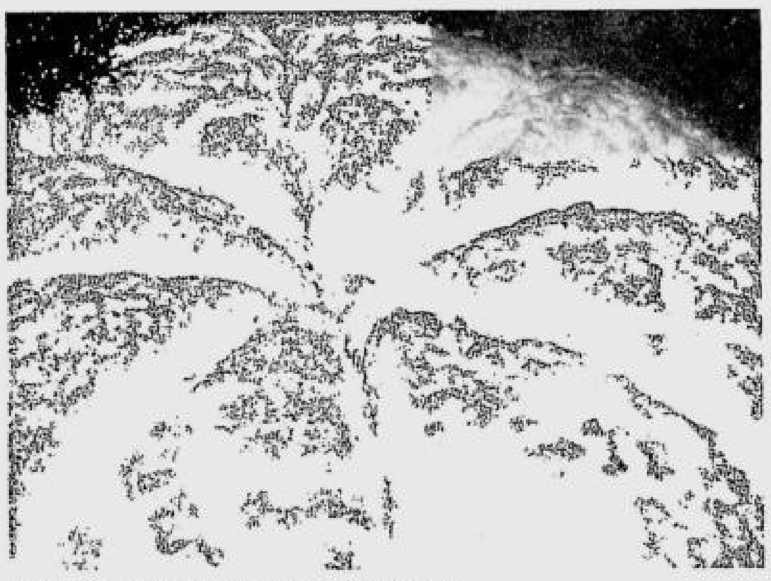
Glazed Scones

1 c powdered sugar, sifted
½ tsp maple extract
2 tbsp Nestlé Fresh Milk

Mix ingredients until smooth. Adjust the amount of milk to get a pourable/spreadable consistency. Spread glaze over each scone. Glaze will harden gradually.

Medley Scones

Add ½ c of dried fruit of choice (mangoes, cranberries, raisins etc.) into the dough before kneading.



SOFT and flaky Saturday Morning Scones

Chocolate Midnight Cookies

1 pc egg
1 tbsp Nescafé Classic
1 tsp vanilla extract
5 40-g Nestlé Dark Chocolate, coarsely chopped
½ c butter
½ c white sugar
½ c dark brown sugar
1 c all purpose flour
1 c oats (preferably quick cooking)
½ tsp baking soda
½ tsp cinnamon
½ c chopped nuts of choice

Preheat oven to 375°F. Line three baking sheets with parchment paper or lightly grease with cooking spray.

In a large bowl, mix the flour, oatmeal, baking soda and cinnamon. Set aside.

In a mixing bowl, stir the egg, Nescafé Classic and vanilla extract.

In the bowl of a stand mixer, beat the butter and sugar on medium speed until light and fluffy, about three minutes. Add the egg mixture.

Add the flour mixture. With a large spatula, stir in the Nestlé Dark Chocolate and nuts.

Using a medium scooper, drop the dough into the prepared baking sheets at least two inches apart. Bake for 10 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool on the baking sheets for five minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely. Store in an airtight container.

Variations:

White Chocolate Midnight Cookies

Use five 40-g. Nestlé White Chocolate bars instead of the Nestlé Dark Chocolate bars.

Marbled Midnight Cookies:

Use 2.5 40'g bars each of Nestlé White Chocolate and Nestlé Dark Chocolate bars.

Coconut Crème Brulee

1 c Carnation Coco Evap
1 c canned coconut cream or coconut milk (if you prefer a lighter custard)
5 pcs egg yolks, slightly beaten
1/3 c sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
¼ tsp salt

Preheat oven to 325°F. Get a large roasting pan or a 9" x 13" Pyrex glass pan. Add water about an inch up the sides and place pan inside the oven.

The water will heat up as the oven preheats. This will be your water bath.

Heat Carnation Coco Evap and coconut cream in a small heavy saucepan over medium low heat just until bubbly or you can heat up the liquid in a four-cup glass measuring cup in the microwave at full power just until bubbles appear around the edges.

Combine slightly beaten egg yolk, 1/3 c sugar, vanilla and salt in a medium mixing bowl.

Using a silicone or other heatproof spatula, slowly stir in the hot cream into the egg mixture (most people will use a whisk but it creates tiny bubbles, which have to be strained out later on).

For even finer custard, strain the mixture into another bowl. Spoon out bubbles.

Grease about six pieces 4-oz ramekins or *pot de crème* cups.

Pour custard mixture evenly into the prepared dishes ¾ of the way. Carefully place the dishes into the now hot water bath.

Bake for 25 minutes or until a knife inserted near the center of each dish comes out clean. These times are only approximations. Baking times will change depending on the depth of the dish used and baking temperature.

Remove dishes from pan. Let cool slightly and then serve warm or you can serve the custards chilled. Cover, chill for one hour or up to eight hours, before serving. Let the custards stand at room temperature for 20 minutes.

Torch if desired.

Variations:

Classic Crème Brulee

Use 2 c of Nestlé Cream instead of the Nestlé Coco Evap and coconut milk.

The JMK is inside the Nestlé Center in Rockwell, Makati. Call Nestlé Consumer Services at 8980061 or fax 8970987. E-mail consumer.services@ph.nestle.com, or write to P.O. Box 1163 Makati Central Post Office, 1251 Metro Manila, Philippines. Visit www.nestlerecipes.com.ph.

Rebirth of an old favorite

Tecnogas guarantees reliability.

THE NEW TECNOGAS ASSURES CUStomers of a product that is 100 percent made in Italy.

Aiming to regain its position of leadership in the Philippine market, Tecnogas guarantees the kind of reliability Filipino consumers expect from Italian-made products.

The company started in 1947 and now employs 600 people and has a production capacity of 500,000 cookers, 200,000 ovens and 100,000 hobs annually.

Tecnogas strives for global progress and industry leadership by manufacturing a wide variety of models, as well as a range of services that evolves with the time.

Today Tecnogas is under the management of the Antonio Merloni group. It has appointed Allied Distributors to introduce to the Philippines the New Tecnogas oven stove.

Toast the holidays

ON NEW YEAR'S EVE AND OTHer special occasions, wine is definitely a staple as this exquisite drink warms the heart, lifts the spirit and heightens one's mood to party.

Superb wines like Carlo Rossi Red Muscat and Carlo Rossi California Red make holidays extra special. Light bodied and easy to drink, Carlo Rossi Red Muscat will appeal to women who like sweet wine. Carlo Rossi California Red, on the other hand, is a rich red, medium-bodied wine.

Carlo Rossi Red Muscat and Carlo Rossi California Red are available in stores nationwide.

THE PEOPLE'S
POWER
Selecta
FORTIFIED
Filled Milk
Fortified with Vitamins A, D, B Complex, Niacin and Calcium
1 Liter
Sterilized Filled Milk
ONLY
₱43
SRP
SARAP AT SUSTANSYANG ABOT-KAYA
MULA SA GATAS NG MASANG PILIPINO.
Tetra Pak
protect what's good
RFM

I am not the only one who loves anything crisp judging from the outlets around town selling the familiar crispy *pata*, the more adventurous crispy *ulo* and even crispy chicken

H E N Y S I S O N
CULINARY SCHOOL

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

THE ESSENTIAL COOKING SERIES: This 20-day hands on class is our innovative way of teaching the basics of cooking & baking. This program is for anyone who wants to work towards becoming a professional chef. Class begins **January 17 – March 23, 2007.** Classes are held every **Wednesdays & Fridays** from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
THE ESSENTIAL BAKING & PASTRY SERIES. This 20– day hands-on class will cover the basics of pastry, desserts, bread baking as well as cake decorating. It is suitable for those seeking an entry-level position in pastry shop, hotel or restaurants. Classes begin on **January 20 – June 2, 2007.** Classes are held every **Saturdays** from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.Tuition fee includes ingredients, manual, aprons, chef's jacket and chef's kit.For more information call **726-5316 or 412 7792** and ask Rita or Jenny.

January 8 (Monday)9:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.(classroom A) **BASIC CAKES & ICINGS FOR BEGINNERS by: Heny Sison**'Butter Cake with Butter Icing, Moist Chocolate Cake with Fudge Icing, Mocha Cake with No-Melt Butter Icing, Lemon Chiffon Cake with Boiled Icing & Sponge Cake with Whipped Cream Icing. **P1,500**

January 8 (Monday)2:00 - 5:00 p.m.(classroom A) **BROWNIES & BARS by: Heny Sison'** Chewy Moist Brownies, Carrot Cake Bars with Cream Cheese Icing, Lemon Cheesecake Bars, Brownies with Caramel Center & Butterscotch Bars. **P1, 500**

January 8 (Monday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom B) **NEW CLASS! CHINESE CHRISTMAS FEAST by: Chef Katherine Sion**'Beggar's Chicken, Chinese Suckling Pig, Fried Crab with salt and pepper, Minced Meat w/ Lettuce, Shrimp Salad, Tikoy. **P3,000**

January 9-10(Tuesday – Wednesday)9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) **CAKE DECORATING COURSE I by: Heny Sison**'Learn the basics of cake decorating: icing, color, star, shell, dots, outline and scallop borders; the rose, figure piping: clowns & booties. Each student will bake & decorate a character birthday cake. **Full participation. P4,000**

January 9 (Tuesday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom B) **NEW CLASS! CHINESE NEW YEAR'S EVE by: Chef Katherine Sion** ' Fried Crispy Chicken served 3 ways w/ Mandarin Pancake, Braised Shrimp w/ Sotanghon, Baked Pork Spareribs w/ Special Sauce, Baby Abalone w/ Chinese Mushroom & Black Hair Moss in Oyster Sauce, Steamed Crab w/ 8 Treasures, Festive Buchi. **P3,000**

January 10 (Wednesday)9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon(classroom B) **NEW CLASS! PRESERVING THE HARVEST by: Chef Carlo Estagle.**"Shelves of glistening, jewel-like jars, filled with preserved fruits and herbs..." That simple description sums up the rewards of canning and preserving. With this simple skill, we can enjoy those seasonal fruits any time of the year. In this course, we'll learn the fine art of drying and making Candied Orange Rind, Candied Glass Lemons, Candied Pineapples, Apple Chips, and Mint Jelly **P1,800**

January 10 (Wednesday)1:00 – 5:00 p.m.(classroom B)**BASIC FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS by: Glenn Remorca,** floral designer' Learn the theories, styles, trends, techniques, sourcing, flower care and maintenance, basic forms, arrangements and flowers for weddings. Lecture, **demonstration and hands-on production. Bring a pair of scissors. P2,500**

January 11 (Thursday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A)**INTRODUCTION TO JAPANESE COOKING by: Chef Koichi Kondo** ' Learn all-time favorites Japanese dishes applicable to home & professional cooking such as: Sushi, Sashimi, Sukiyaki, Miso Soup, Tempura, Teriyaki, Udon Noodles in Clay Pot, Chicken Teriyaki & Japanese Fried Rice. **P2,500**

January 11 (Thursday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom B)**NEW CLASS! BAKING 101 by: Chef Vicki Villanueva**'Learn the many things that taken for granted but make a big difference, especially in the bottom line. Learn vital techniques, purchasing, equipments costings, Baker's percentage, production option and trends for 2007. Please bring calculator and notebook. **Recipes include:** Very Berry Cake w/ Chantilly Cream, Ube Chiffon Cake w/ buttercream, Buttercake and Angel Cake. Reservation is requested. **Hands-On Class. P2,650**

January 12 (Friday) 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A)**NEW CLASS! PIE WORKSHOP by: Heny Sison**'Macadamia Pie, Tarte Tatin, Coconut Cream Pie, Banoffee Pie, Fudge Brownie Pie. **P2, 500**

January 12 (Friday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom B) **NEW CLASS! THE ART OF CUPCAKE by: Chef Vicki Villanueva**'Devil's Food Cake w/ Marshmallow Topping, Apple Walnut Cupcake, Feng Shui Cupcake, Green Tea Tiramisu Cake, Double Fudge Cake and Carrot Cream Cheese Cupcake. Reservation is requested. **Hands-On Class. P2,650**

January 13 (Saturday) 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon(classroom A) **HEALTHY GOURMET - SOUTH BEACH DIET PHASE 1 by: Jacqueline H. Alleje,** owner of Rizal Dairy Farm, Swiss-Pinoy restaurateur (Vieux Chalet Swiss restaurant), organic caterer and food consultant (Petra's naturally green, global, gourmet)' This class is suitable for all people who want to be able to cook healthy dishes, lose weight considerably and people with health concerns such as diabetes, high blood pressure and other dietary restrictions. The class will guide you through the principles of healthy nutrition. South Beach Diet phase 1 "Swiss Pinoy Style", which uses locally available ingredients. **Complete menu plan and recipes for 14 days of Phase 1. P1,500plus P700 recipe booklet for Phase 1**

January 13(Saturday)1:00 - 4:00 p.m.(classroom A)**HEALTHY GOURMET – SOUTH BEACH DIET COMBO CLASS PHASE 2 and 3 by: Jacqueline H. Alleje.** This class is suitable for all people who want to learn how to cook healthy dishes, deepen their knowledge of nutrition and weight control, as well as people with health concerns, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and other dietary restrictions. This class teaches wholesome recipes which reintroduce carbohydrates with complete recipe booklets for phase 2 and 3 of the South Beach Diet. **P1,500 plus P700 per recipe booklet'**

January 13 (Saturday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom B)**NEW CLASS! THE ART OF MERINGUEby: Chef Vicki Villanueva**'Canonigo, Marjolaine, Sans rival, Concorde, Pavlova and Brazo de Mercedes. Reservation is requested. **Hands-On Class. P2,650**

January 15 - 16(Monday – Tuesday)9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A)**CAKE DECORATING COURSE II by: Heny Sison** 'Add amazing new skills to your cake decorating – the world of icing flowers, distinctive borders, flower spray & specialty flowers. As a final project you will decorate a basketweave cake filled with cascading flower. **Full participation. P4,000**

January 15 (Monday)9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.(classroom B) **ALL ABOUT FRENCH MACAROONS by: Chef Vicki Villanueva**'Learn step-by-step preparation. A most sought after give away for Christmas and Weddings. **Flavors include:** Hazelnut, Chocolate with Ganache, Caramel, Lemon with Curd, Strawberry, Coffee and Ube with Halaya. **Reservation is a must! P1,850**

January 15 (Monday)1:30 – 5:00 p.m.(classroom B) **NEW CLASS! VALENTINES GIVEAWAYS by: Chef Vicki Villanueva** 'Learn how to use compound sugar free chocolate and tempering. **Recipes include:** Truffles, Bonbon, Praline, Rose Chocolates, Liqueur Flavored Ganache, Heart Shape Cookie Pop, Cupid Cookie Pops, White Chocolate Walnut Clusters and Rocher. Reservation is requested! **P1,850**

January 16 (Tuesday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom B)**COFFEE CLASS by: Chef Aileen Anastacio-Sandoval,** owner of Goodies N' Sweet Bakeshop & C'est Si Bon, Dean's list graduate of Culinary at the California Culinary Academy' If you are planning to open a coffee shop this course is for you. Learn the four fundamentals of coffee brewing, home espresso, guide to steaming & foaming. Make fun toppings & garnishes & master the art of coffee making. **Recipes:** Caffé Latte, Caffé Mocha, Caffé Americano, Cappuccino, Espresso Macchiato & Espresso Con Panna, Almond Coffee Freeze, Icy Rum Coffee Cream, Toffee Coffee, Mudslide Malt, Mocha Rumba, Rocky Road and more! **P3,000**

January 17 (Wednesday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom B) **BARBECUE WITH SAUCES & DIPS: WORKSHOP by: Chef Sam de Leoz,** Food Consultant, Stylist, Photographer, Caterer. Food demonstrator and Culinary Competition Events Consultant specializing in Basic & Classical Cookery; International & Asian Cuisine.Hands-on Barbecue Workshop providing innovative method prepared for small entrepreneur and caterer in order to pay the way for business opportunities and increase the revenue for the coming holiday season.'Spicy Buffalo Wings w/ Blue Cheese Dip & Celery Stick, Famous Aling N2 Barbecue w/ Melitzanosalata (Spicy Over Gin Dip), Indonesian Mixed Satay: Mixed Beef & Lamb w/ Sambal Kacang (Peanut Sauce), Yakitori w/ Mango Black Bean Salsa, Grilled Seafood Medley: Prawns, Scallops & Fish Fillet w/ Mustard – Dill Vinaigrette, Grilled Sausage w/ Cilantro Aioli Dip, Amorgozo (Ampalaya) & Smoked Fish Morsels w/ Cottage Cheese & Garlic Crunch Dressing, Java Rice. **P2,000**

January 18 (Thursday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00p.m.(classroom A)**BAKED PASTAS by: Chef Aileen Anastacio-Sandoval Recipes:** Beef Lasagna, Vegetable Lasagna, Chicken Macaroni, Baked Spaghetti and Baked Seafood Pasta. **P1,800**

January 18 (Thursday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom B) **NEW CLASS! COFFEE SHOP SANDWICHES by: Chef Vivian Syyap,** Private Chef/Caterer. Associates in Occupational Studies, Culinary Arts, with honors. The Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, New York.'Reuben, Pastrami, Meatball Sub, Chicken Parmigiana on Sour Dough Rolls, Grilled Mediterranean Vegetables with Hummus on Pita. ***Pls. reserve 3 days before.*** **P1,850**

January 19 (Friday)9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.(classroom A)**NEW CLASS! MEAT PROCESSING I by: Chef Vicki Villanueva** Open a rewarding all day dining (tapsilog) or home based business. Apply the new concepts, principles and techniques of making a longanisa, chorizo, tocino, corned beef, tapa, luncheon meat, embotido from scratch. The preparation of ice tea, atchara and flavored rice, and lunch is included. **P2,800**

January 20 (Saturday)9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon(classroom A)**NEW CLASS! MUFFIN WORKSHOP by: Jacqueline H. Alleje'** Muffins can be considered the healthier alternatives to doughnuts and cinnamon buns. They are good to eat, and can be made with a wide array of nutritious and delicious ingredients. Learn the perfect steps to perfect muffins and choose from 10 mouthwatering recipes: Banana Yogurt Muffin, Chocolate-Ricotta Muffin, Spicy Raisin Muffin, Cocoa-Nut-Oatmeal Muffin, Sweet Potato-Walnut Muffin, Parmesan-Tomato Muffin, Chocolate-Cinnamon Muffin, and Low Fat Muffins: Herbed Brown Rice, Carrot-Orange and Raisin Bran Muffin. Students may assist in the preparation of the muffins. **P1,500**

January 20 (Saturday)1:00 – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) **NEW CLASS! START THE NEW YEAR with HEALTHY GOURMET SOUPS FOR EVERYDAY By: Jacqueline H. Alleje**'Learn how to prepare different stocks as basis for healthy soups: Vegetable Stock, Chicken Stock, Court Bouillon, as well as delicious, easy-to-do recipes: Carrot-almond soup, Spicy Caramelized Onion Soup, Lettuce Cream Soup, Creamy Pumpkin Soup w/ coconut milk, Cyprus style Fish Soup, tofu and Bread Croutons and Spicy Tomato Pea Soup. **P1,500**

January 22-23, 26-27 & 29(Monday-Tuesday, Friday-Saturday & Monday) 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon(classroom A)**GUMPASTE FLOWER MAKING by: Heny Sison**'A unique method of making gum paste using a foam pad, a pair of scissors and cutters. **The course covers:** the Rose, Carnation, Stephanotis, Tulips, Filler Flowers, Cattleya, Christmas Holy, Poinsettia, Daisy, Tiger Lily and Quick Leaves. Learn how to use airbrush and edible petal dust to color the flowers and bunch them into a bouquet. **Full participation. P5,000**

January 22-23, 26-27 & 29(Monday-Tuesday, Friday-Saturday & Monday) 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) **ADVANCED CAKE DECORATION by: Heny Sison**'This course covers: baking of fruitcake, covering it with marzipan then with rolled fondant. Learn South African and Australian methods using delicate icing wings, curtainings, ribbon insertion done on rolled fondant, quilting & cut-outs **Prerequisite: MASTER IN CAKE DECORATION. Full participation. P10,000**

January 22-23, 26-27 & 29(Monday-Tuesday, Friday-Saturday & Monday) 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon(classroom A)**CAKE DECORATING COURSE III by: Heny Sison**'Learn how to create a tiered wedding cake, embellishing borders, side borders, string work, filigree, fancy flowers, color flow on cookies, sugar molding, lattice for the side of the cake and tiered cake ideas. The grand finale to course 3 is an impressive wedding cake. **Full participation. Prerequisite: Cake Decorating Course 1 & 2. This completes the Master Course in Cake Decorating. P8,000**

January 22-23, 26-27 & 29(Monday-Tuesday, Friday-Saturday & Monday) 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) **LAMBETH CONTINENTAL COURSE (The Ultimate in Cake Decorating)by: Heny Sison**'The course covers: the intricate overpiping borders on royal icing and fondant covered cakes. Students decorate cake using combination of overpiped borders and tiny flowers. Master Course and Advanced Cake Decoration Course are prerequisite to this course **Full Participation. P10,000**

January 22 (Monday)9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon(classroom B) **PANADERO PANADERIA 1by: Nestor Magrimbao,** Baker, FERNA Corporation ' Pacencia, Galletas, Otap, Biscocho, Mamon Tostado, Rosquillos. **Demonstration w/ student participation. P1,500**

January 23 (Tuesday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom B) **NEW CLASS ! ALL THINGS CREPES by: Chef Vivian Syyap**'**Savory:** Breakfast Flemish Eggs (Chorizo, ham, Capsicum, Green Beans & Asparagus), Shrimp Curry w/ Mango, Crepe Manicotti'**Dessert:** Crepe Samurai, Strawberry Sabayon, Poached Apples w/ Caramel & Crème Anglaise. **P1,850**

January 24 (Wednesday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom B)**NEW CLASS ! CHARCUTERIE BASICS (SAUSAGE WORKSHOP) by: Chef Vivian Syyap**' Learn the art of curing, brining, and basic sausage-making. **Featuring:** Fresh Corned Beef, Pastrami, Breakfast Sausage, German Bratwurst, Frankfurter, Smoked Sweet Italian Sausage **Please reserve 3 days before. P3,500**

January 25 (Thursday)9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.(classroom A) **JAPANESE RICE TOPPING by: Chef Koichi Kondo Recipes:** Oyako-don (Chicken & Egg on Rice), Gyudon (Beef Bowl), Tendon (Tempura Bowl), Katsu-don (Pork Cutlet Bowl), Soboro-don (Minced Chicken & Egg Bowl), Tori Teriyaki-don (Chicken Teriyaki). **P1,700**

January 25 (Thursday)1:30 – 5:30 p.m.(classroom A)**SUSHI CLASS by: Chef Koichi Kondo**'Temaki-Zushi (Do-It Yourself Sushi Rolls), Bara-Zushi (Scattered Sushi), Inari-Zushi (Sushi Pockets), Futo-Maki Zushi (Thick-Rolled Sushi), Teka-Maki (Hand-rolled Tuna Sushi), Kappa-Maki (Sea Cucumber Sushi) and California Maki. **P1,700**

January 25 (Thursday)9:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.(classroom B) **NEW CLASS! EMPANADA AT LUMPIA by: Chef Vicki Villanueva**'Empanada Kaliskis, Chicken Pie, Beef Pie, Lumpiang Gulay, Lumpiang Amoy, and Lumpiang Ubod **P1,650**

January 25 (Thursday)2:00 – 5:00 p.m.(classroom B)**NEW CLASS ! REPUBLIC OF PANCITI by: Chef Vicki Villanueva**'Pancit Malabon, Special Sotanghon, Hab-Hab, Phad Thai, Pancit Puti and Beef Hofan. **P1,950**

January 29 (Monday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom B) **NEW CLASS ! SOUFFLE BASICS By: Chef Vivian Syyap**'Cheese Souffle, Smoked Salmon Souffle, Spinach Souffle, Chocolate Souffle, Orange Souffle. **P1,850**

January 30 (Tuesday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) **KOREAN COOKING I: A WORKSHOP by: Chef Cecile Park,** owner of Silla Korean Restaurant & food consultant to various Korean restaurants in Metro Manila'Beef Bulgogi (Tenderloin & ordinary), Chicken Bulgogi, Pork Bulgogi, Chap Chae, Mi Yuk Guk (Soups: Seaweeds, Beef or Tahong), Bibimbap & Kalbi Jim. **P2,500**

January 30 (Tuesday)10:00 – 4:00 p.m.(classroom B)**NEW CLASS ! VALENTINE DESIGNER'S CAKE by: Chef Vicki Villanueva**'Opera Cake, Strawberry Cheesecake, Black Forest, Zebra Cake, Chocolate Mousse Torte. Learn to make Chocolate Stencils, Marbleized Choco Plaques, Chocolate bands and Chocolate Shavings. **P1,850**

January 31 (Wednesday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) **NEW CLASS ! COOKING FOR MR. RIGHT (A Valentine Offering) by: Chef Vicki Villanueva**"He's your kind of man, the sweet mamas boy, the corporate magnate, the Rugged Outdoorman to Mr. Culture; play him with food that speak to his soul. Unlock his heart by the way of his stomach. **Recipes include:** Oyster on a Half Shell, Shrimp, Feta & Tomato Salad, Chocolate Souffle, Champagne Sabayon w/ Strawberries, Liver Pate, Salmon Wellington, Caviar w/ Blinis and Rack of Lamb w/ Herbed Dijon Crust. **P2,800**

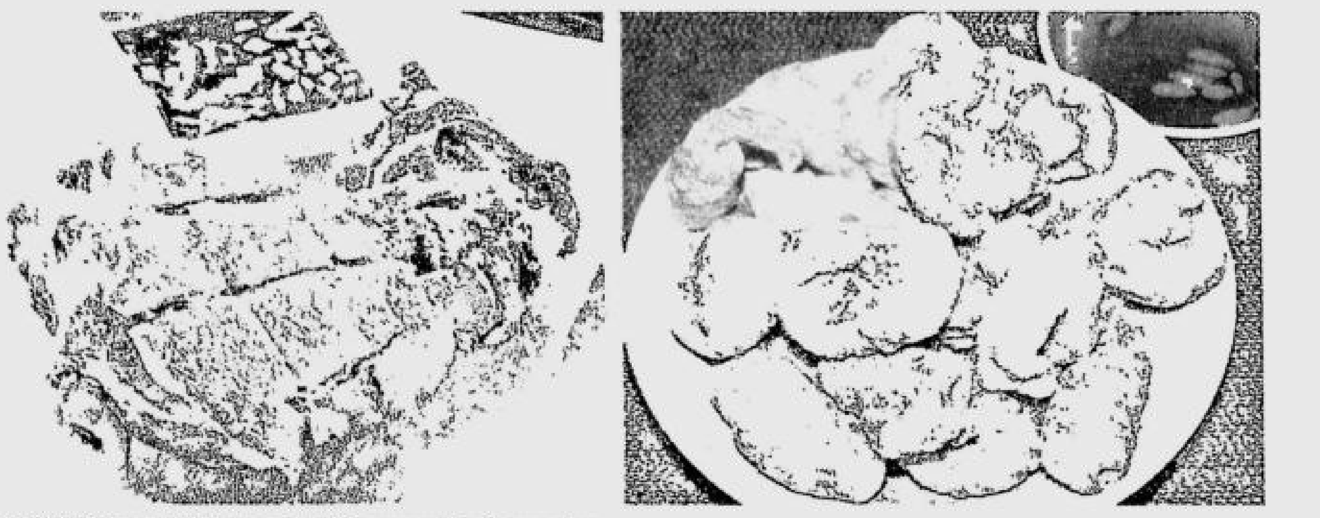
TUITION FEE includes ingredients.
Reservation is required.
WEDDING & BIRTHDAY CAKE
orders by appointment only. We sell Cake Decorating, Confectionery and Baking Supplies.

FOR RESERVATIONS & INQUIRIES
visit or call us at:
33 Bonnie Serrano Avenue
(formerly Santolan Road), Quezon City
Telephone #: 726-5316 / 412-7792
E-mail: henysison@pacific.net.ph
Website: www.henysison.com

WATCH "A TASTE OF LIFE WITH HENY SISON" at IBC Channel 13 every Sunday, 11:00-12:00 noon

Gold
FRESH MILK
PRESTO•AVOSET GROUP
Pehco POWDERED SUGAR
Cream Cheese
PUREFOODS
SUPREMO

COUNTRY COOKING
Micky Fenix



BLISTERS on *crispy pata* and *chicharon* make them crisp.

Crunch time

WHEN LARRY CRUZ asked me for a recipe to be included in his newest restaurant, Abe at the Serendra, Fort Bonifacio, I asked him if I could just give him my favorite dish from among the menus of his LJC group of restaurants. The choice was a snap to make—crispy *tadyang* or deep-fried beef ribs.

I like anything crunchy. I like crisp. I can also say I like calorific crisp. I'll take the fatty goodness as long as it's crisp.

I've always been amazed at how the tougher beef parts like the ribs could be made tender and then crunchy. When I asked Larry Cruz to at least give me a hint, he only smiled. And that smile could have meant one of three things: He didn't want to give away a trade secret; he was amused that I had to ask because the process was so simple; or only his chefs knew.

Crispy hock

The closest I get to doing crisp cooking is following the instructions on the Monterey Crispy Pata packet—remove the product from the freezer, thaw a bit, remove the packaging then deep-fry in a big wok of hot oil. It has removed the drudgery of doing crispy *pata* from scratch.

There are two schools of thought on how to do crispy *pata*. One says you have to boil the *pata* first. Another would have you fry the leg first just as you would do *chicharon*, then air-dry or freeze it.

Whichever method is used, the *pata* has to undergo two rounds of frying. This is to create the needed blisters and therefore assure you that this meat will end up crisp and crunchy. The technique includes how to avoid the splattering hot oil getting on your skin so as not to make your own skin crisp.

Ilocano crunch

At food shows, the first thing I look for is the Ilocos region's *bagnet*. These whole chunks of pork can be used sparingly to flavor one's *pinakbet* or whatever vegetable dishes need some perking up. For the frugal Ilocano, my penchant for eating *bagnet* as *ulam* must be ostentatious.

Lechon kawali can substitute for the *bagnet* but it is not as good. I suppose it's the air drying that's missing in the procedure.

I am not the only one who loves anything crisp judging from the outlets around town selling the familiar crispy *pata*, the more adventurous crispy *ulo* and even crispy chicken.

The crispy *ulo* is a variation of the *pata*. It's a whole pig's head, cut in two, prepared and then fried to a crisp. It's sinful and calorific but terrific. One bite and you forget how you should be careful about your diet.

But the products aren't the only attractions. Stall names can make your day. For instance, have you seen the one named Cleo Pata? And what about claims such as "All our products are fried in Canola oil"? Oh yes, that should make anyone feel good about the *pata* being fried in so-called healthy oil. (Canola is a brand name for rapeseed oil produced in Canada.)

I don't have any proof of this but I hear that these "crispy" outlets are a project of a meat company. The company provides the products, though I doubt they include Canola oil. It's a peculiar marketing system that also saw the sprouting of *pan de sal* stalls and popcorn stands, all because there are machines and material to be sold.

'Chicharon'

But while I'm partial to crisp food, I always have second thoughts about *chicharon bulaklak*, the cooked part of the pig's intestines nearer the stomach. I only have to look at those curly pieces to feel the cholesterol build up in my arteries.

Yet when *chicharon bulaklak* is done properly I can go beyond my self-imposed allocation of two pieces. At a recent lunch at the home of Salie Henson Naguiat in Angeles, Pampanga, *chicharon bulaklak* was the appetizer. It looked so inviting because it appeared greaseless and smelled divine. Salie said there was only one person in town she trusted to do the *chicharon* properly.

In Cebu, we were privy to a debate as to which town had the better *chicharon laman* (including rind, fat and meat). We sampled the Liloan version that people there claimed stayed crunchy days after you bought the pack. But the Carcar *chicharon* is what you hear about most of the time.

In Leyte, an aunt used to give me *chicharon* of carabao rind. Not being a *chicharon* connoisseur, I couldn't detect how different it was from the pork rind kind.

And, in Iloilo, a big vat containing oil was explained as the result of extraction from pork fat. The Panaderia de Molo, for instance, still uses pork lard in its cookies which is why they turn out crisp and taste so buttery good.

What remains of the pork fat when fat is rendered are small bits of *chicharon*, like the "Bisaya" variety. In Ilonggo country that is called *tulapo*. Like the *bagnet*, the *tulapo* is mainly used to add flavor and add texture to dishes such as the *apan-apan* (*kangkong*) *adobo* where the pieces are strewn on top.

My *tulapo*, however, is eaten as is. My body reacts to its crisp richness with goose bumps.

E-mail author at pinoyfood04@yahoo.com

Show your spots on New Year's day

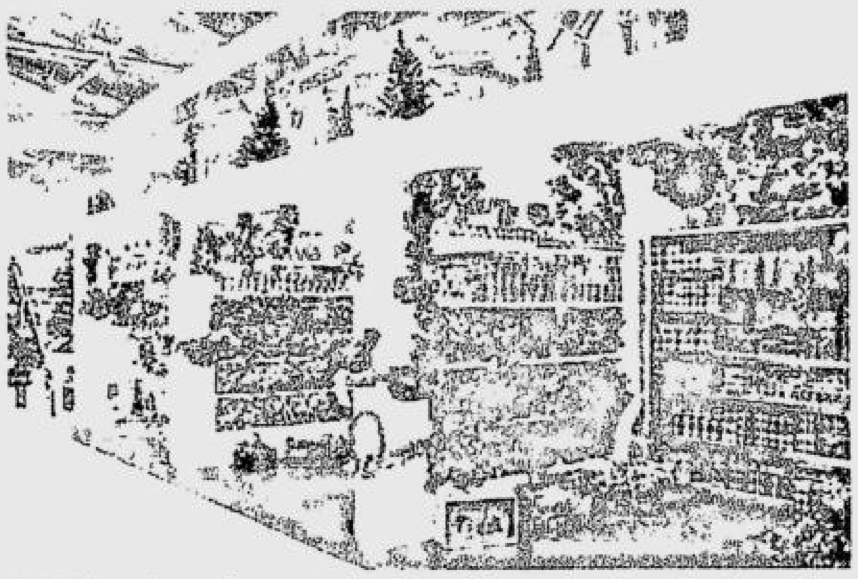
PREPARING FOR THE NEW YEAR Media Noche feast need not be difficult if you know where to go.

Shopwise Hypermarket is the one-stop shop that offers almost everything you can possibly need to celebrate arrival of the year 2007.

From *queso de bola*, pastries, chocolates, to all kinds of fresh produce, you do not have to go anywhere to get all the things you need for a festive event.

And if you go to Shopwise dressed in polka dots on Dec. 31, you get to have a chance to win in the Dots the Day promotion and bring home M&M's gift packs.

Shopwise is located in Makati, Libis, Antipolo City, ground floor of Harrison Plaza Mall, Festival Supermall in Alabang, and Araneta Center, Cubao.



VISIT Shopwise and get spotted on Dec. 31 in your favorite polka dot outfit for a chance to win M&M's goodies.

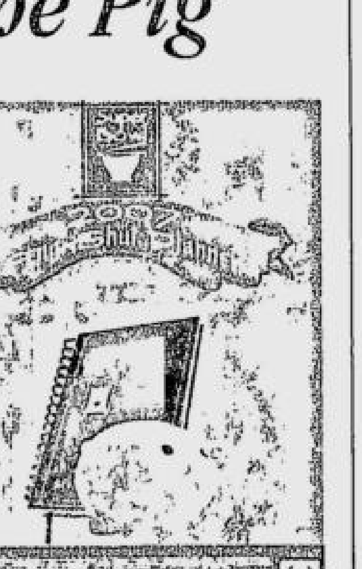
Plan for the Year of the Pig

SUPER BOWL OF CHINA prepares for the Year of the Pig, expected to bring abundance, joy and harmony, by giving away free 2007 Feng Shui Planners to loyal clients through its Royalty Card.

For an initial single-receipt purchase worth P500 at any Super Bowl of China outlet, diners get a Royalty Card to be stamped every time they order Super Bowl's signature dishes. When all 20 spaces had been filled, the diner gets a free 2007 Feng Shui planner.

Royalty Cardholders immediately get one free planner with a single-receipt purchase worth P4,000. A minimum P15,000 one-time catering expense is entitled to four free Feng Shui planners.

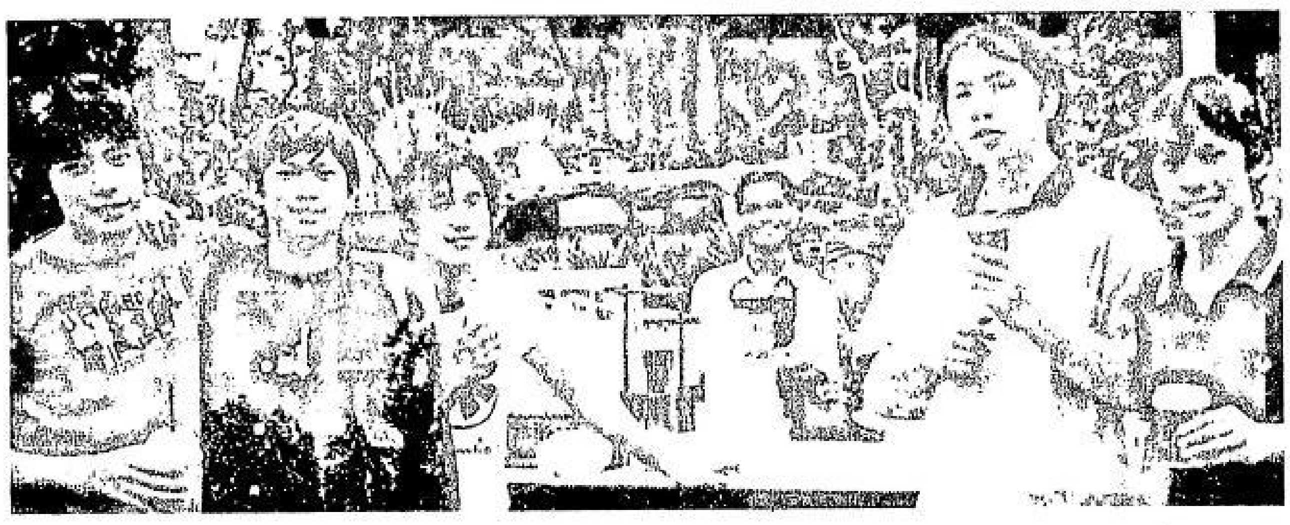
Super Bowl of China is at Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati; Jupiter Street, Makati; Festival Mall, Alabang; SM City North Edsa; SM Megamall Megastrip; SM City Fairview; Promenade Greenhills; SM City San Lazaro; Blue Wave Marikina; Eastwood Citywalk 2, Libis; Tomas Morato, Quezon City; Gateway Mall, Araneta Center; Roxas Boulevard, corner UN Avenue; SM City Valenzuela; Blue Wave Macapagal Avenue, Pasay City; and at SM Mall of Asia, Pasay City.



For feedback, e-mail us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Text us your feedback:
inquirer life name/age/city/message to
2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

LIFESTYLE



THE BLOOMFIELDS with their cups of Kape ni Juan: Rocky Collado, Pepe Lozano, Louie Poco, Lakan Hila and Jayjay Lozano

SHRIMP Pâté at Restaurant Inyo

A perfect afternoon and a perfect place

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

IT WAS ONE OF THOSE COOL breezy December afternoons when perfection meant a good cup of coffee with your favorite people.

Last Tuesday, I had a perfect afternoon, in the company of Jayjay, Rocky, Louie, Pepe and Lakan, members of my band of choice, The Bloomfields!

It was busy day for me that unfortunately left me with very little time to prepare food. That meant that I needed my allies to make life easier for me. I cooked a bit but the rest I left up to the able hands of Patrick Uy and the Camachos of Prime Beef (tels. 9265647, 0918-9104913), roasters of *lechon baka* by the slab. It's a great way to entertain. It's visual.

Patrick Uy is the genius behind Kape ni Juan (tels. 0917-5277141 and 0920-9235976). He belongs to a group called Yabang Pinoy, proud young nationalistic entrepreneurs who do not just honor and hail their roots but promote all things Filipino as well.

Kape ni Juan is our "pambato," our answer to foreign franchised coffee houses. Juan will definitely give John a run for his money!

Kapeng Benguet (excellent!), Amadeo, Lipa and concoctions, such as Moka Prap (a frappuccino spin-off), Kapeng Ye (for yelo/iced coffee), Tsokolateng Ye... *Ito ang mga Kape ni Juan*—100-percent Pinoy!

If you are a coffee drinker and a purist who likes your coffee black, like I do, you will agree that Kape ni Juan is serious coffee. It can stand tall and proud beside all the great beans of the world. Truth is it tastes superior to many of the imported ones I've tried.

The good news is Patrick and company do coffee catering, which is what I had them do for me. They bring everything, including a counter that they position just about anywhere you wish. They even have *kakanin* and little cakes that they make themselves. The setup is cute, perfect for the holidays!

Lugging coffee cups, The Bloomfields tuned their instruments and in no time started jamming. Even without coffee, their energy is caffeine personified. Could you imagine how they played after a couple of cups?

Well, like a dream! Floating on air figuratively and literally as they jumped and leapt up high! It's sheer pleasure to watch such love for craft, evident in every strum of a chord, every beat of the drum, every lyric to a song. The vibrancy of youth, how tough it is to match!

As the sun set on us, the music continued to rock to the tune of the Beatles, the Beach Boys and original cuts from their up and coming album. The good times continued to roll... What a lovely day in December it turned out to be!

To my dearest Bloomfields, to Patricia and George as well: It's your season! May your stars forever glisten. Cheers!

To you Patrick: Rest in the thought that Kape ni Juan, like rock and roll, is here to stay! *Mabuhay ka*!

If you haven't seen the Bloomfields perform, then you must! They are on at Strumm's Jupiter 9 p.m. on Tuesdays and at Eastwood 8:30 p.m. on Wednesdays. Visit their website thebloomfieldsband.com. To book the band,

A PERFECT/ D3

OVEN-BAKED Sushi-style Prawn Roll

Year-End Spectacular Offer

15% Off

on all items except food & wine

Thursday, December 28 - Friday, December 29, 2006

MARKS & SPENCER

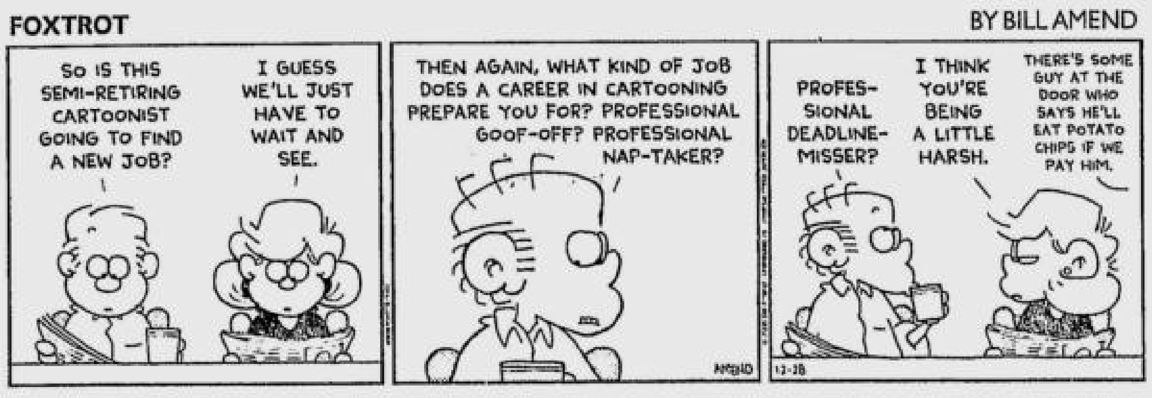
Shangri-La Plaza Mall (637-2480) • Glorietta 4 (752-7471) • Greenbelt 3 (757-4816) • Alabang Town Center (842-4558)
SM Megamall A (632-0171) • Robinsons Place Manila (522-7871/76) • Power Plant Mall (898-0946-48)
Ayala Center Cebu (032-234-1005) • SM City Pampanga (045-963-9287/88) • Gateway Mall Araneta Center (912-8114 / 912-8339)
SM City North Edsa (927-7560/61) • Robinsons Galleria East Wing (634-4234) • SM Mall of Asia (901-1922)

Rustan Marketing Specialists, Inc. (RMSI) is the official franchisee of Marks & Spencer in the Philippines

PER DTI-NCR PERMIT No.5591 SERIES OF 2006

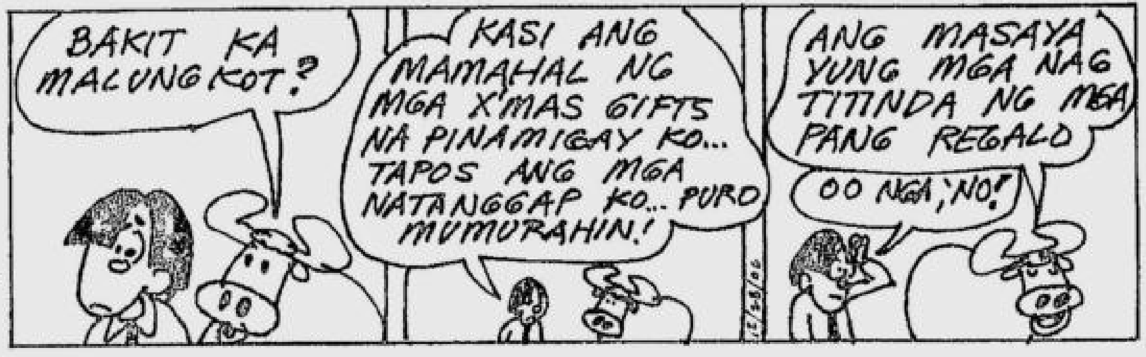
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


SO IS THIS SEMI-RETIRING CARTOONIST GOING TO FIND A NEW JOB?
I GUESS WE'LL JUST HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE.
THEN AGAIN, WHAT KIND OF JOB DOES A CAREER IN CARTOONING PREPARE YOU FOR? PROFESSIONAL GOOF-OFF? PROFESSIONAL NAP-TAKER?
PROFES-SIONAL DEADLINE-MISSER?
I THINK YOU'RE BEING A LITTLE HARSH.
THERE'S SOME GUY AT THE DOOR WHO SAYS HE'LL EAT POTATO CHIPS IF WE PAY HIM.
AMEND
12-28

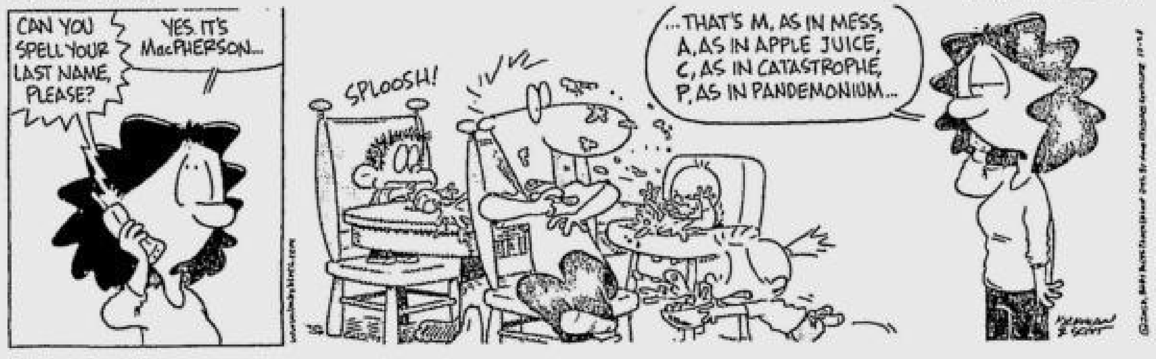
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


BAKIT KA MALUNGKOT?
KASI ANG MAMAHAL NG MGA X'MAS GIFTS NA PINAMIGAY KO... TAPOS ANG MGA NATANGGAP KO... PURO MUMURAHIN!
ANG MASAYA YUNG MGA NAG TITINDA NG MGA PANG REGALO
OO NGA, NO!

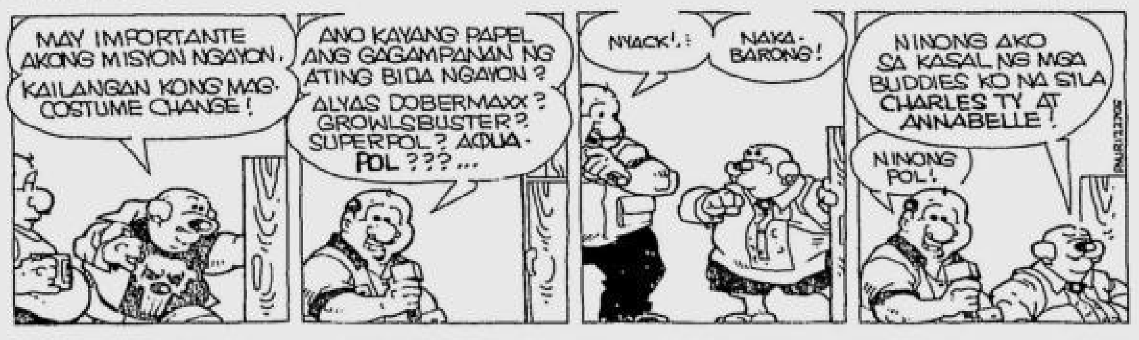
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


CAN YOU SPELL YOUR LAST NAME, PLEASE?
YES. IT'S MacPHERSON...
SPLOOSH!
...THAT'S M, AS IN MESS, A, AS IN APPLE JUICE, C, AS IN CATASTROPHE, P, AS IN PANDEMONIUM...
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

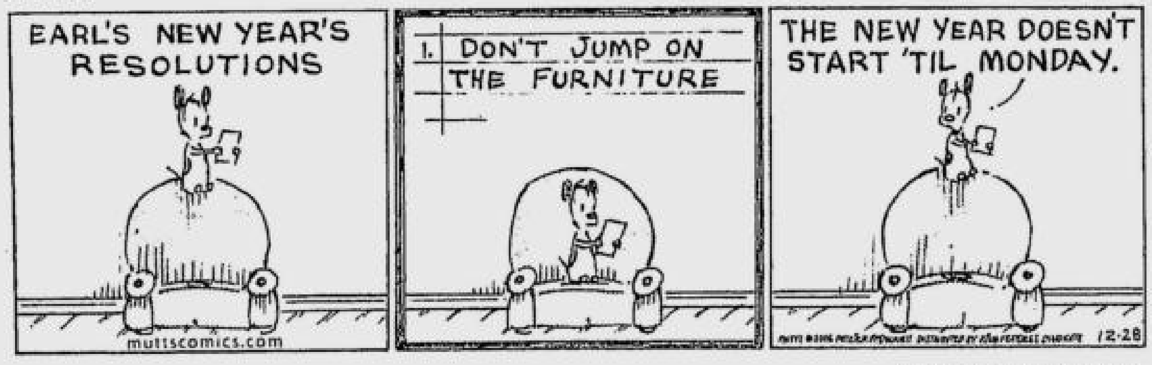
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


MAY IMPORTANTE AKONG MISYON NGAYON.
KAILANGAN KONG MAG-COSTUME CHANGE!
ANO KAYANG PAPEL ANG GAGAMPANAN NG ATING BIDA NGAYON?
ALYAS DOBERMAXX? GROWLSBUSTER? SUPERPOL? AQUA-POL???...
NYACK!
NAKA-BARONG!
NINONG AKO SA KASAL NG MGA BUDDIES KO NA SILA CHARLES TY AT ANNABELLE!
NINONG POL!

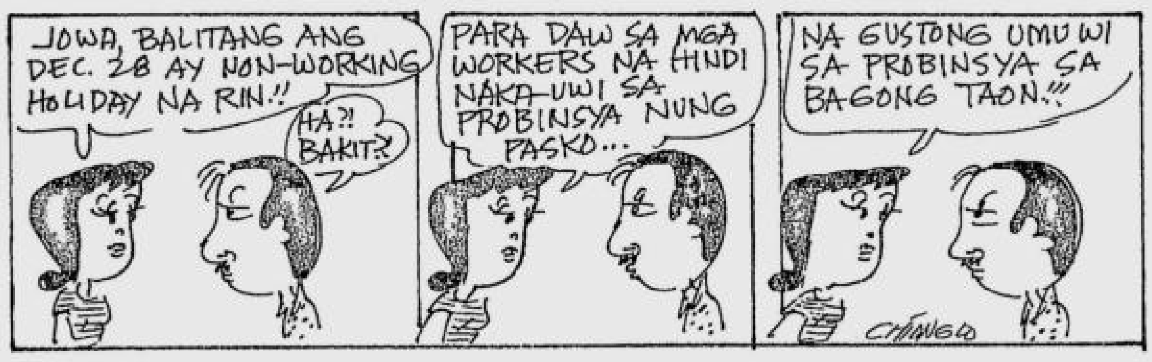
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


EARL'S NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS
1. DON'T JUMP ON THE FURNITURE
THE NEW YEAR DOESN'T START 'TIL MONDAY.
muttscomics.com
12-28

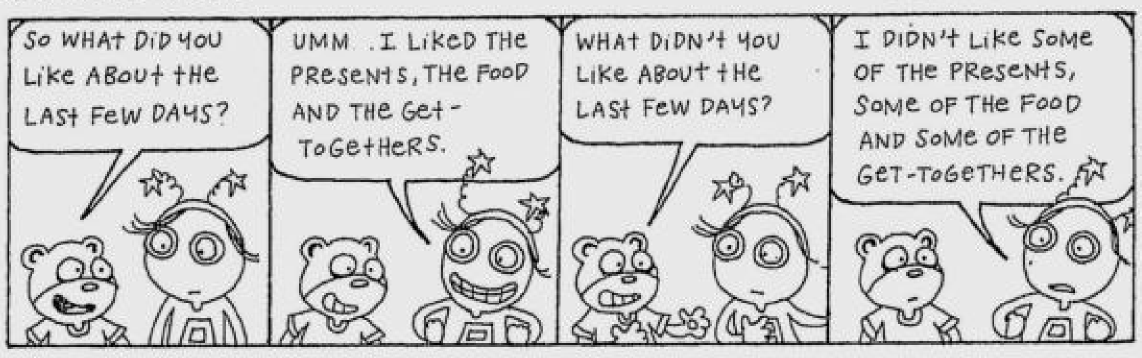
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JOWA, BALITANG ANG DEC. 28 AY NON-WORKING HOLIDAY NA RIN!!
HA?! BAKIT?
PARA DAW SA MGA WORKERS NA HINDI NAKA-UWI SA PROBINSYA NUNG PASKO...
NA GUSTONG UMUWI SA PROBINSYA SA BAGONG TAON!!!
CHIONGLO

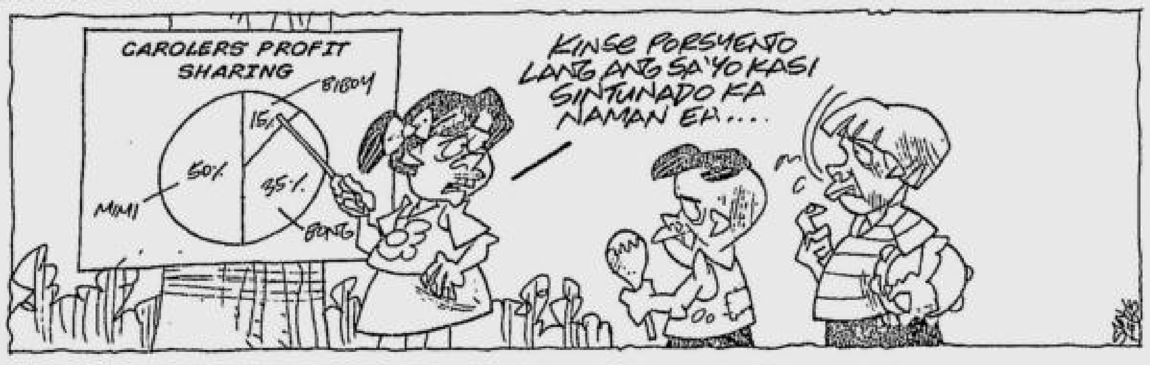
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


SO WHAT DID YOU LIKE ABOUT THE LAST FEW DAYS?
UMM. I LIKED THE PRESENTS, THE FOOD AND THE GET-TOGETHERS.
WHAT DIDN'T YOU LIKE ABOUT THE LAST FEW DAYS?
I DIDN'T LIKE SOME OF THE PRESENTS, SOME OF THE FOOD AND SOME OF THE GET-TOGETHERS.

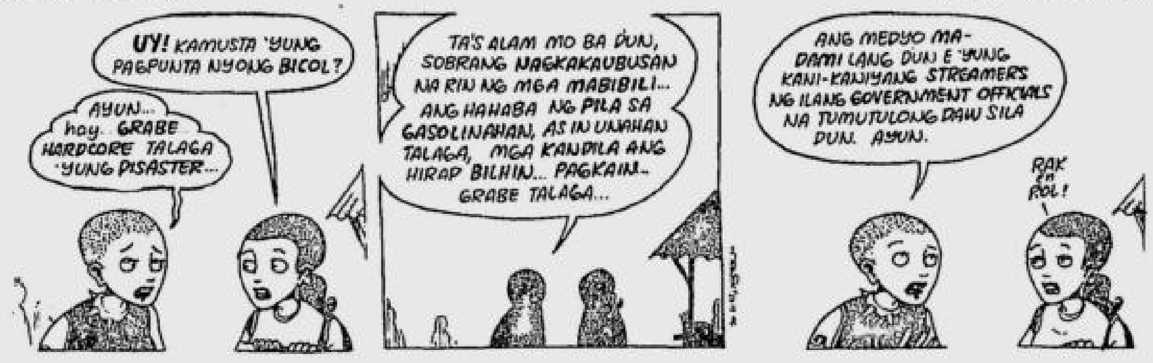
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


CAROLERS PROFIT SHARING
BIBOY
15%
50%
35%
MIMI
BONG
KINSE PORSYENTO LANG ANG SA'YO KASI SINTUNADO KA NAMAN EH....

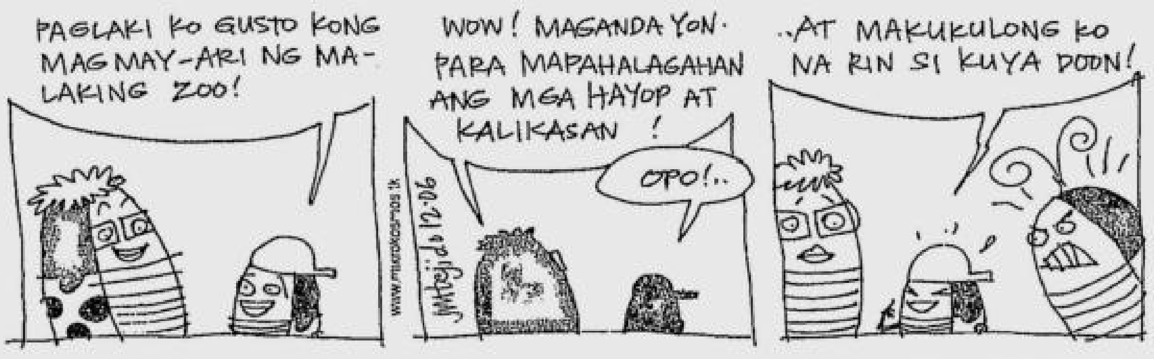
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


UY! KAMUSTA 'YUNG PAGPUNTA NYONG BICOL?
AYUN... hay. GRABE HARDCORE TALAGA 'YUNG DISASTER...
TA'S ALAM MO BA DUN, SOBRANG NAGKAKAUBUSAN NA RIN NG MGA MABIBILI... ANG HAHABA NG PILA SA GASOLINAHAN, AS IN UNAHAN TALAGA, MGA KANDILA ANG HIRAP BILHIN... PAGKAIN... GRABE TALAGA...
ANG MEDYO MA-DAMI LANG DUN E 'YUNG KANI-KANIYANG STREAMERS NG ILANG GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS NA TUMUTULONG DAW SILA DUN. AYUN.
RAK EN ROL!

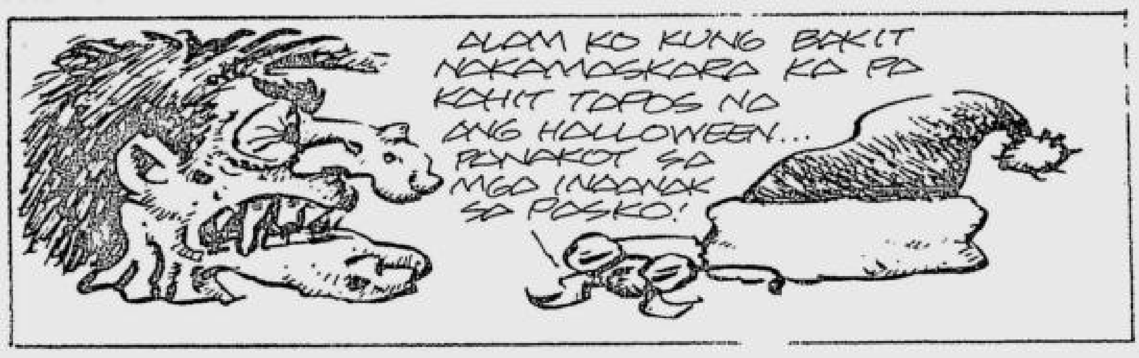
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


PAGLAKI KO GUSTO KONG MAG MAY-ARI NG MA-LAKING ZOO!
WOW! MAGANDA YON. PARA MAPAHALAGAHAN ANG MGA HAYOP AT KALIKASAN!
OPO!..
..AT MAKUKULONG KO NA RIN SI KUYA DOON!
Jomike Tejido 12-06

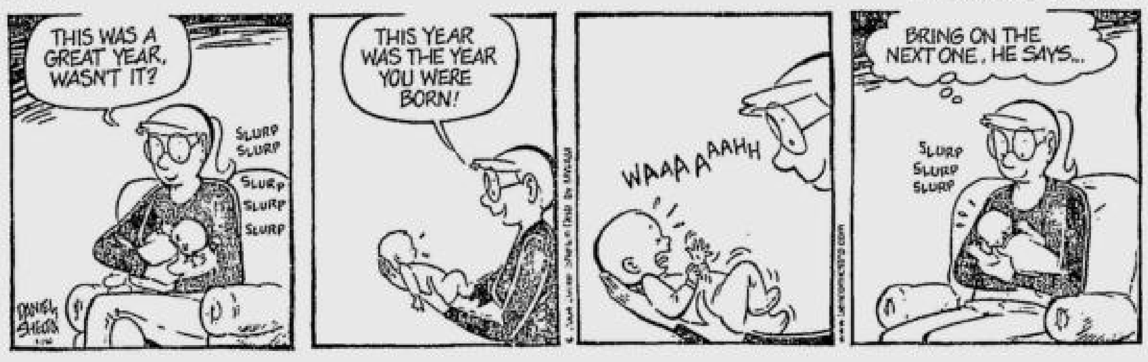
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ALAM KO KUNG BAKIT NAKAMASKARA KA PA KAHIT TAPOS NA ANG HALLOWEEN... PANAKOT SA MGA INAANAK SA PASKO!

BEN

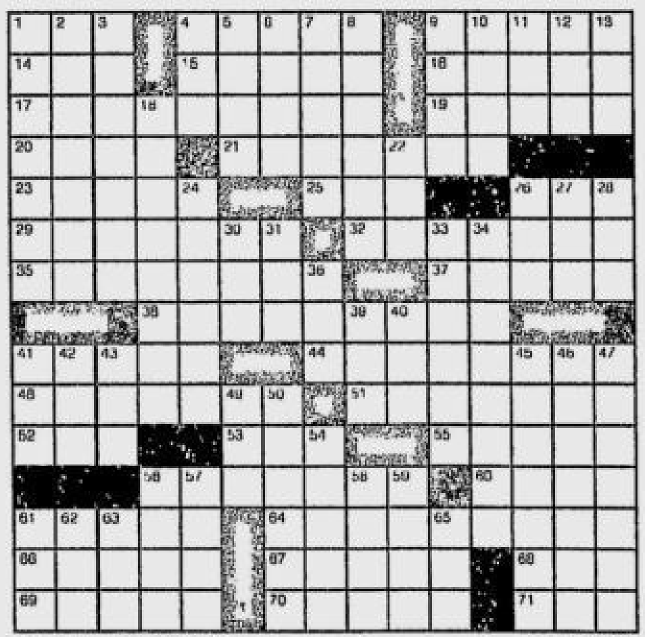
BY DANIEL SHELTON


THIS WAS A GREAT YEAR, WASN'T IT?
SLURP SLURP
SLURP SLURP SLURP
THIS YEAR WAS THE YEAR YOU WERE BORN!
WAAAAAAHH
BRING ON THE NEXT ONE, HE SAYS...
SLURP SLURP SLURP
DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Family dog
4 Chances
9 "Countdown" network
14 Hosp. workers
15 Utter boredom
16 In the future
17 Start of a George Carlin quip
19 Dove and Rudner
20 Facial feature
21 Irregularly shaped stain
23 Waldheim and Weill
25 Literary miscellany
26 NYC gambling center
29 Arm of a sea
32 Helmsman
35 Stopped
37 "The Flying Dutchman" painter
38 Part 2 of quip
41 Largesse recipient
44 Large lizards
48 Studies
51 Thoroughwort
52 Coffee server
53 Jolson and Jarreau
55 Arrive at
56 Fortress wall
60 Threesome
61 Singer Shore
64 End of quip
66 Color-full device?
67 "Lemon Tree" singer Lopez
68 Theatrical signal
69 Angry
70 Heated dispute
71 Attention getter

DOWN
1 Needled?
2 Bubble over
3 Casual tops
4 Stimpy's cartoon buddy
5 Writing fluids
6 Cut with shears
7 __ Lumpur, Malaysia
8 Carly and Paul
9 Artist Franz
10 __ Tzu
11 Butterfly snare
12 Sound sheepish?
13 LPs, updated
18 Sensed
22 Create lace
24 Pageant bands
26 Former fort near Monterey
27 Peg for a golfer
28 Yow, it's cold!
30 66 or A1A, e.g.
31 Beatles song, "__ Blues"
33 Making missteps
34 Canines
36 GOP rival
39 Watch chain
40 Lennon's lover
41 Joanne of "All the King's Men"
42 "__ the ramparts..."
43 Bobbsey twin
45 Swift-running bird
46 Followers
47 Paul of Peter, Paul and Mary
49 Egt.-Syr., once
50 Braids
54 Let live
56 Ago
57 Verbal sigh
58 Send off
59 Coloration
61 Printer letters
62 Damaged mdse. tag
63 Long or Peeples
65 Yucatan uncle


1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71

By Michael T. Williams
Clearwater, FL

12/28/06

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

P	R	O		S	C	R	U	M		A	M	P	L	E
I	O	U		P	A	I	N	E		B	A	R	E	S
R	U	N	N	I	N	G	A	R	G	U	M	E	N	T
A	S	C	E	N	D			G	A	T	E	S		
T	E	E	S		I	N	S	E	T	S		I	L	K
E	D	S		E	D	I	T	S			E	D	I	E
			S	L	A	K	E		S	C	R	E	E	N
	F	I	G	H	T	I	N	G	W	O	R	D	S	
A	U	N	T	I	E		G	O	O	D	S			
R	E	D	S			P	E	R	R	Y		P	T	A
I	L	O		C	U	R	L	E	D		R	A	I	D
		L	O	O	S	E			P	E	S	T	L	E
O	P	E	N	H	O	S	T	I	L	I	T	I	E	S
P	E	N	C	E		T	I	T	A	N		O	R	T
E	A	T	E	N		O	X	E	Y	E		S	S	E

(C)2006 Tribune Media Services, Inc. All rights reserved.

12/28/06

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're hardworking, conscientious and dependable. You have influence in your circle because you always look like you know what you're doing. You have abundant energy and keen powers of concentration. You enjoy life, but you value your work. It will please you in the year ahead to have a chance to build and construct something important to you.

Birthdate of: Denzel Washington, actor; Maggie Smith, actress; Don Francisco, TV host.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You're very clear-headed today about future plans regarding sports, taking care of children, vacations and anything having to do with the arts. You know what you want.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a good day to look for answers to hidden questions. You might solve old problems. Patience definitely pays off now.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Someone older, wiser or more experienced than you are can offer advice today. Listen to what this person says. You don't have to reinvent the wheel.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Give some thought to your long-term direction in life today. The world steps aside for someone who knows where he or she is going. Future goals help you to maintain focus on what you're doing now.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is a good day to make long-term plans about travel, higher education or anything related to publishing, medicine and the law. Make a list of what you want to achieve.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): It's important to be clear about who owns what in any situation where there is shared property. Today, you can define where your responsibilities begin and end with someone.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Talk to close friends and partners about how to include others (especially groups) in your relationships. Things change the minute more people are involved. It's simple mathematics

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a great day to make long-term plans regarding your job. Work that requires attention to detail and careful planning will go well today.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You're in a sensible frame of mind to discuss sports, romance and anything having to do with educating or raising children. Make a list of what you want to achieve in any of these areas.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Family discussions are practical and productive today. You're not in a frivolous mood. You want to get things done. You want results that will last into the future

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Your ability to pay attention to detail is excellent today. Now is the time to tackle routine work that normally bores you. (Plus, you have the perseverance to stick to the job.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): When shopping today, you're only interested in practical, long-lasting items. You want to get value for your hard-earned money.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

		9	7			4		
	1			8			6	
6					9			1
		1						3
	9			3			5	
5						6		
8			3					6
	4			5			3	
		7			6	9		

Difficulty Level ★★★

12/28

©2006 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	6	2	3	9	1	8	4	7
7	3	1	4	8	6	5	9	2
8	9	4	7	5	2	6	3	1
3	1	9	6	7	8	2	5	4
2	8	7	1	4	5	3	6	9
6	4	5	2	3	9	1	7	8
4	2	3	5	1	7	9	8	6
9	5	6	8	2	4	7	1	3
1	7	8	9	6	3	4	2	5

Difficulty Level ★★★

Gray areas of marketing

THE CONSUMER

By Linda B. Bolido

AS THE TERM IMPLIES, "GRAY MARketing" is something that is rather in limbo—not completely bad as to be black and yet not completely legitimate as to be white.

What gray marketing is all about, according to the Department of Trade and Industry, is the sale of branded goods at very low prices by dealers who are not in the network of authorized sellers.

Anybody who is always looking out for a good bargain must have bought one or two items this way.

But the DTI says the reason why the branded goods are much cheaper than they would be otherwise is, since the seller is not part of the manufacturer's or the licensed distributor's authorized dealer network, they usually do not carry the usual warranty.

So what, you might say, as long as you can get a product that carries a well-known brand dirt cheap?

Well, the money you save—and more—may eventually go to service and repair.

The DTI says the low price attached to these "gray" goods means there is practically no after-sales service or warranty protection from the manufacturer or distributor.

If the product you bought breaks down, the authorized service center may even refuse to receive it. And even if they do, they might charge you for the labor and spare parts, even if the usual one-year warranty period is not over yet.

To avoid such inconveniences, especially unnecessary expense, the DTI encourages consumers to buy only from authorized dealers. After all, if you want branded products, chances are you also want only the best care and service for them.

Going to an authorized service center assures you that the people you would be dealing with were trained specifically for a particular brand's products. You are also so guaranteed of getting only the genuine spare parts.

And if the product is still covered by a warranty, you will not have to pay for both labor and parts.

And many companies now seem to be so sure of their products that they are even willing to guarantee them for more than a year, even for life.

Buying from an unauthorized dealer might lose you that privilege.

The DTI suggests that when buying something that should be covered by a warranty, check if the establishment is an authorized dealer and if the product comes with a warranty.

Otherwise, your effort to cut costs may be an exercise in futility.

Feedback

Jodi Smith, an Australian and long-time Manila resident, wrote to say she totally agreed with the Nov. 30 column on establishments that expected customers to give them only small bills.

"I find it annoying to be asked for smaller notes when I am shopping at the supermarket. I often feel like saying that "if I had the change, I would have given it to you"... Instead I refrain and wait for them to produce the change. It is time-consuming (and any frozen items or butter is slowly melting). I feel that it is very poor customer service, and with better planning it could be eliminated."

She mentions "another pet peeve," long lines at cash registers. "It seems that large stores have no qualms about making their customers stand in line for 20, sometimes even 30 minutes. It is particularly frustrating when there are a large number of registers closed, and even larger numbers of staff who appear to be doing nothing."

Meanwhile, reader Janice suggests that concerned parents and individuals should sign up with the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for updates on toys being recalled due to hazards they pose. "There's an option in their (CPSC) website on how to sign up and receive updates on products being recalled from the market, even a picture of the product is provided."

She adds. "We are (unknowingly) killing our kids when we patronize toys poorly made."

E-mail lbolido@inquirer.com.ph

Give something true,
Get something cool!

Subscribe to the Inquirer and receive cool gifts like this all-weather jacket!*

☐ Subscription 1 (360 issues) at P6,480, PLUS these FREE items worth P4,696!
- 22 bonus issues • Hinge Inquirer Magazines
- Inquirer Magazine Supplements
.... an Inquirer Jacket

☐ Subscription 2 (180 issues) at P3,240, PLUS these FREE items worth P2,130!
- 10 bonus issues • Hinge Inquirer Magazines
- Inquirer Magazine Supplements
... an Inquirer Coffee Mug

☐ Subscription 3 (90 issues) at P1,620 PLUS these FREE items worth P1,072!
- 4 bonus issues • Hinge Inquirer Magazines
- Inquirer Magazine Supplements
PLU an Inquirer Handy Bag

FREE delivery

*Promo open to new subscribers residing in Metro Manila only.

Cash, Cheque, Master Card, or Visa payments accepted.
Go ahead, take a stand. Call now.
Philippine Daily Inquirer delivers.
Promo Period is from December 18, 2006 to February 28, 2007.
See flyers for full details. Per DTI-NCR Permit # 5525, Series of 2006.
Call 896-6000 to subscribe

Three reasons to eat breakfast

BREAKFAST IS CONSIDERED THE most important meal of the day but it is often skipped in the rush to get somewhere.

Now Shakey's makes it easy for people on the go to have a filling meal as they begin their day with its three breakfast offerings.

The Shakey's Omelette Plate is served with ham and cheese and a hash brown, while the Shakey's Breakfast Plate is served with two eggs, done sunny-side up or scrambled; garlic fried rice with a choice of ham, bacon, *adobo* flakes or sizzlers sausage patty.

The Shakey's Bunch of Breakfast is served with two slices of French toast, two eggs done sunny-side up or scrambled, a hash brown with a choice of ham, bacon, *adobo* flakes, sizzlers sausage patty.

All offerings are garnished with tomatoes, cucumbers. They also come with a glass of pineapple juice and a cup of brewed coffee.

Breakfast meals are served 7-10 a.m. They are initially available at Shakey's Valero, Makati; El Pueblo, Ortigas; Loyola, Katipunan; and Bluewave Marquinton, Marikina.

For pizza delivery, dial Shakey's delivery hotline 77777. Remember, if delivery is late, the pizza is free.

How to choose good pasta

PASTA WILL, NO DOUBT, BE A regular feature in almost every party this holiday season.

To help ensure that your pasta will be a success, the first step is, of course, to choose the right kind of noodles.

Pasta maker Colavita offers some helpful tips and insights on how to choose quality pasta.

See whether the sauce stays on or slides off the pasta. Pasta that does not absorb the sauce well is a low-grade product. Quality pasta increases in size when cooked and does not become mushy when prepped in water.

When cooked, pasta should always have a pleasant fresh odor and flavor, indications that it is made only from fresh ingredients and the best raw materials.

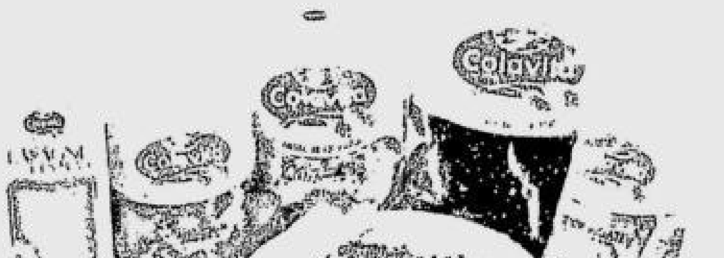
Combine light sauces with delicate pastas like angel hair, farella (bow tie), or cavatappi (spiral-shaped pasta). Heavy sauces go well with bulky and thick pastas like spaghetti, lasagna and cannelloni.

For quality pasta, Colavita offers products that are healthy, easy and convenient to prepare. Colavita pasta is made only from the finest ingredients, 100-percent durum wheat semolina and pure water that comes from the springs of Molise, Italy.

It was awarded the Uni en Iso 9002 and the kosher certificate. Handmade Colavita pasta comes in 120 different shapes and sizes.

Colavita also carries premium Olive Oils.

It is exclusively distributed by Benby Enterprises Inc. and is available in leading supermarkets.



COOKED pasta should always have a pleasant fresh odor and flavor.

A perfect afternoon . . .

From page D1

call 0917-5007010.

Fusion without confusion

The timeless question: Restaurant suggestions especially for the holidays, please!

Nothing excites me more than a bunch of up and coming chefs who make their mark early on in their careers. Such is the case of Humphrey Navarro's proteges Nino Laus, Gary Reyes, Cris Orocio and Jonjon Tiozon—the young, creative minds behind Restaurant Inyo.

Inyo serves fusion cuisine, French-Japanese, the chefs drawing inspiration from Nobu and Thomas Keller. A quaint little restaurant that hit the right formula since the day they opened some three months ago.

Finally, here is a restaurant that is a whole package—good food, excellent presentation, portions that are quite generous yet modestly priced, with an ambience that is uniquely its own to boot.

It is one of those places you will go back to, over and over again, to have a decent meal. The memory from the last visit somehow dares you to venture on, to try something new. Alas, without pinching your pockets! It is the cheapest gustatory experience around town.

So wonderful is it that after having returned consecutively, I haven't tried anything that was not to my liking. They have managed to play with their food, fusing it right, while painstakingly plating them to look like works of art.

Inyo is one of the few restaurants where fusion is not confusion!

Inyo is at 66 Esteban Abada St., Loyola Heights. I suggest you make reservations by calling 9266495 or 4260301.

Amor, salud y pesetas! These, I wish you and yours! Happy New Year!

E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph

Canon
Delighting You Always

DON'T LET PRECIOUS MEMORIES FADE AWAY
Use only genuine Canon Inks and Paper

Don't let precious photos deteriorate in quality by using fake refill and compatible inks and papers. For best quality photos that will last a lifetime, use only Canon genuine inks and papers. They're designed to perfectly complement all Canon printers, so you can print your photo files flawlessly, with superb accuracy, brilliant colors and absolutely no distortions. With genuine Canon Inks and Papers, you're assured that every detail is captured at a truly professional level.

Specifically use Canon Pixma Printers + Canon Genuine Inks + Canon Genuine Papers

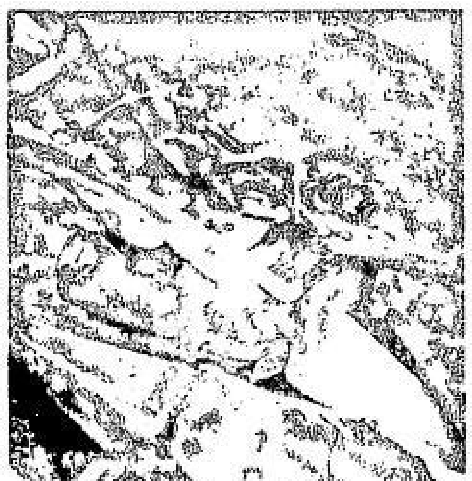
Canon PIXMA printers are fully covered by 1 year warranty + Full printing performance with no clogging of print heads + Beautiful vivid photos today and forever with ChromaLife100 technology

Smart genuine
Use Canon Ink and Paper
FINE
ChromaLife100

Insist on an original warranty issued by Canon Marketing (Philippines), Inc

South & Southeast Asia Regional Headquarters:
Canon Singapore Pte Ltd 1 Harbour Front Avenue #04-01 Keppel Bay Tower, Singapore 098632 www.canon-asia.com
Canon Marketing (Philippines), Inc.
2F Marvin Plaza, 2153 Don Chino Roces Avenue cor. V.A. Rufino St., Makati City Tel.: 884-9000 • Fax: 810-9797 • info@canon.com.ph • www.canon.com.ph

RICHMONDE Hotel's The Grill offers special New Year's Eve dishes like Pastel de Lengua, Grilled Blue Marlin with Lime Caper Sauce, Prawns Tempura, Meat & Seafood Paella, Roast Prime Rib, Roast Lamb Leg and Roast Pork Belly. Call 6387777.



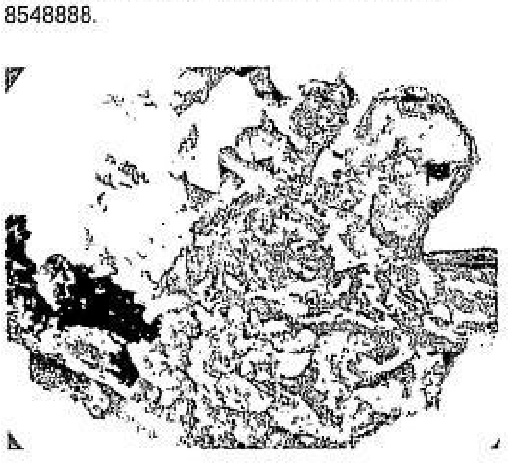
RED Crab (2/L Corte delas Palmas, Alabang Town Center, tel. 7722968) presents "Grand Holiday Buffet" with local and international dishes like Pineapple Glazed Hamonado, Oriental Beef Roulade, BBQ, Tilapia Fillet, Lengua Sevillana, Maryland Crab Cakes, Roast Honey Pineapple Chicken and all-time favorite crab dishes. Another branch is at 104 Tomas Morato Avenue, QC (tel. 3748406).

2007 will be a blast

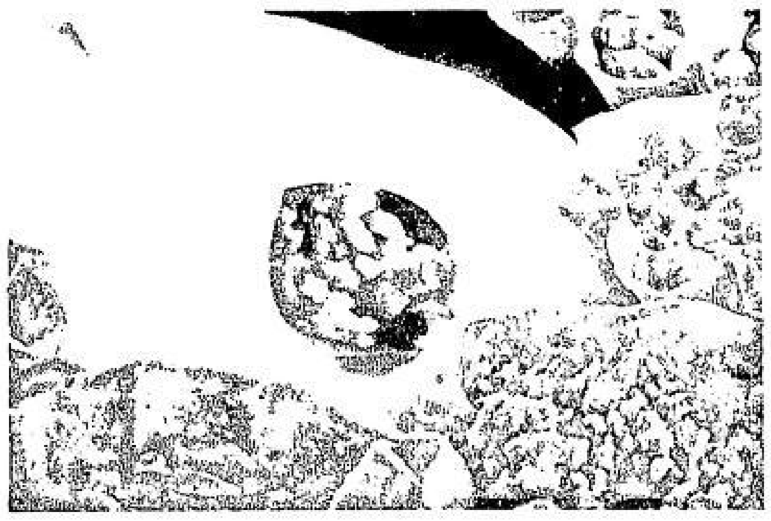
DINING OUT

MANILA PAVILION HOTEL welcomes the new year with the 2007 Blast Off!!! New Year's Countdown Party. Guests can have cocktails at 6 p.m. at the 3rd floor foyer then dinner at 7:30 p.m. By 9 p.m., a live band plays for those who love dancing. Price is P2,007 net for two. The 2007 Blast Off! New Year's Countdown Party is part of the Yuletide Madness room package. Guests booking under this promo package automatically gets two reservations for the dinner-dance party. Call 5261212 local 2385.

THE HERITAGE HOTEL MANILA'S Restaurant Riviera offers a New Year's Eve buffet. On Jan. 5-7, you can watch the pyrotechnic display of the 2nd World Pyro Olympics from the restaurant. Call 8548888.



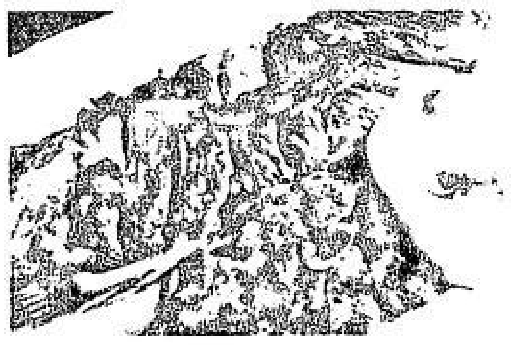
HULA-HULA Seafood and Barbecue House offers Luau Feast. All-time favorites include Jumbo Belly Chops and Pork Barbecue. Also available are the Island Sushi Selections and Island Curry Plates. Hula-Hula has branches at Shangri-La Street Scape; Shangri-La Plaza Mall; Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City (tel. 9103218); and Westgate, Filinvest City (tel 7712291 or 7712289).



TIA Maria serves warm flour tortillas with a choice of ground beef, chicken, onions, cheese, beans, salsa, guacamole, lettuce and sour cream. Enjoy them with a free glass of iced tea. Promo is available this month at all Tia Maria's and Cantina outlets.

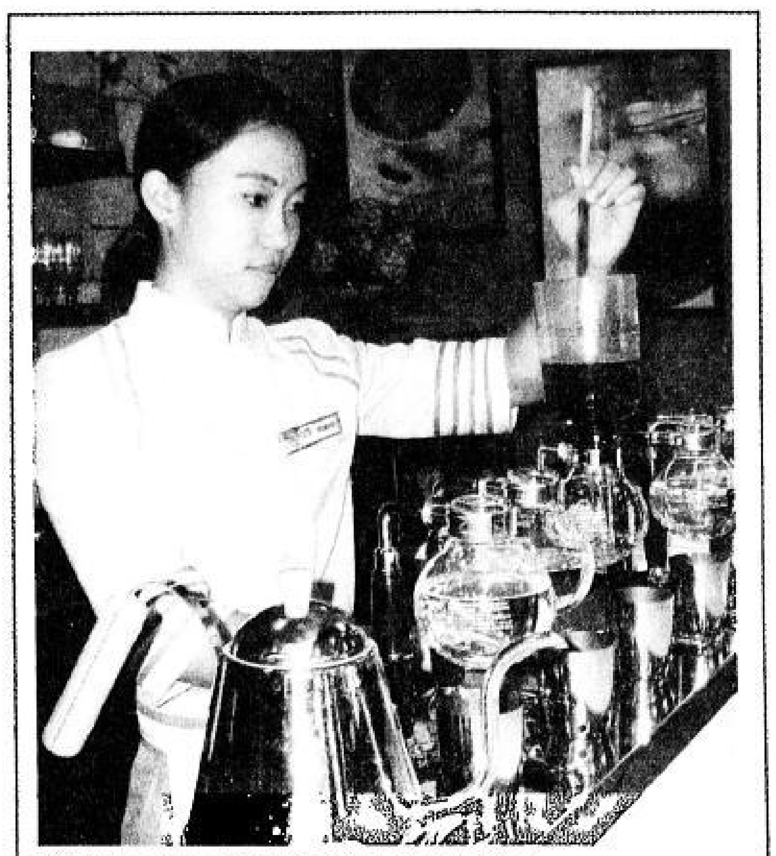
BURGOO offers Christmas dishes with its all-time favorite items like Oklahoma-Style Grilled Baby Back Ribs, Rib-Eye Steak, Seafood Caesar Salad, Lemon-Peppered Grilled Lapu-Lapu, Grilled Pork Chops, Country-Style Fried Chicken, Supreme Pizza, Supreme Platter, Angel Hair Classico with Grilled Chicken Americana, Seafood Linguini, Raspberry Cheesecake, among others. Call 9277424, 6875254, 7264663, 9136112, 9127939 and 4420104.

CHILI'S has a new menu of healthy grilled entrees like Grilled Steak with Roasted Herb Jus, Sausage & Spuds, Steak Skewers and Sweet Soy Salmon. Chili's is at Missouri and Nevada Streets, Northeast Greenhills (7272959); Greenbelt 1, Ayala Center, Makati (8120225); and Tomas Morato Avenue, Quezon City (37250170).



SUGARNOT will give people living in the south, particularly Westgate residents, a taste of baked and delicatessen goodies especially prepared for diabetics, health conscious individuals and weight watchers. But Sugarnot's extensive menu also has a lot to offer other people looking for a different but tasty experience. Sugarnot has a variety of deli sandwiches and salads. Desserts and snacks, however, are sugar-free. They include donuts, muffins, freshly baked breads, original cake creations, and ice cream and pralines. Westgate Alabang is at the Commerce Avenue of Filinvest Corporate City in Alabang, Muntinlupa City. Visit westgate@filinvestcorpcity.com or call 8503516.

BLACKBEARD'S Seafood Island has a special holiday treat. With every order of Boodle Feast (grilled seafood selections with pork belly, vegetables and rice), diners get one order of Kapitan's Mussels for free. A special beer and cocktails promo is available 9 p.m.-2 a.m. daily. Branches are at Fiesta Market, Market! Fort Bonifacio, Global City (tel. 8867692); Araneta Center, Cubao; and 536 Remedios St., Malate, Manila (tel. 4009980).



UCC prepares coffee using the siphon method.

The magical black brew

CRAVING A CAFFEINE FIX may not be so bad after all.

New medical research suggests coffee has some health benefits to offer.

- Some studies found coffee contained anti-cancer agents and might have more antioxidants—disease-fighting substances—than some fruits.
- Caffeine increases alertness and improves mental processes. A study by the Radiological Society of North America suggested a link between coffee drinking with better short-term memory.
- Coffee has been associated with the reduction of colon and bladder cancer cases because of some chemicals it contains.
- A cup of coffee has been found to have the ability to relieve an asthma or allergy attack.
- Drinking coffee increases the body's metabolism, thus, can aid in weight loss.
- A Scottish health study found that people who drank coffee were less prone to heart disease. Those who drank more than three cups daily were found less likely to develop high blood pressure.
- Another recent study suggested that coffee could be a sexual stimulant.
- A separate cancer study showed that the more people drank coffee the less likely they were to develop cancer of the liver.
- Coffee has also been found to reduce development of type 2 diabetes.
- A new cancer study linked higher coffee consumption to lower percentage of women developing breast cancer. A report from the University of Toronto said those "who drank six or more cups of coffee a day on average had about 75 percent reduction in the risk of developing breast cancer."

So enjoy your brew. If you haven't yet, try the UCC Coffee's siphon-brew in its cafés at Tomas Morato, QC; Connecticut Street, Greenhills; The Podium, Ortigas Center; The Paseo Center, Makati City; Rockwell Drive, Makati City; The Fort, Taguig City; Westgate Center, Alabang; and Mall of Asia, Pasay City.

BPI Express Credit
SUPERMARKET POWER
BUZZ
win what you buy!

TAKE HOME WHAT YOU HAVE IN YOUR BASKET FOR FREE! Plus more!

Here's how:

1. Take part in the Supermarket Power Buzz. Rush to the BPI Express Credit lane within the 10-second Buzz and win what you have in your shopping cart!
2. Get special prizes courtesy of Del Monte at the BPI Express Credit booth for a minimum single receipt purchase of P2,500.
3. BPI Express Classic cardholders get twice as many Del Monte products!

Be rewarded every time you use your BPI Express Credit Card!

FIT 'n RIGHT

See flyers for details.

Promo period: December 15, 2006 - January 31, 2007

S.I.P.

Call 89-100
and apply now!

Per DTI-NCR No. 5062, Series of 2006.

Robinsons Supermarket

Walter Mart Supermarket

BPI
We'll take you farther.

'Antala': A vanishing 'kakanin'

By Nimfa Doroteo-Camua

(Editor's Note: One of six winners in this year's Doreen Gamboa Fernandez Food Writing Awards, this essay was written by Nimfa Doroteo-Camua, a media consultant at the Asian Institute of Journalism. In her hometown of Santolan, Pasig, the rice cake Antala is usually served at the patapos of a dearly departed or during the Lenten pabasa.)

UNLIKE OTHER RECIPES HANDED down from one generation to another, *antala* is a *kakanin* that is rarely cooked today. Sadly, its history and popularity have been lost in the maze of instant and ready-to-cook desserts of my adulthood.

Antala was a popular *kakanin* in the 1950s until the 1960s at a small barrio in Pasig called Santolan. The simplicity of *antala* matched the ordinariness of life when kids could still play and take a *banca* ride along the Pasig River without fear of getting kidnapped or mugged by strangers. It was my childhood when every one either knew or was a *kamag-anak* of everybody; when society was still genteel and children minded their *pos* and *opos*, and when *mano po* was not yet a movie but a genuine greeting of respect.

I asked people I grew up with how *antala* started and how it got its name. No one could say. Not even Inang Handra, my paternal grandmother, the late Alejandra Santos Doroteo whose kitchen always bustled with activity and whose impeccable taste for good food is still vivid in my mind today.

My Inang Handra always supervised the cooking of *antala*. It is made with simple ingredients—*malagkit* (glutinous rice), sugar, coconut milk—and was usually served during a *patapos ng padasal*, the last day of prayers for a dearly departed one, or at the Lenten *pabasa* when chanters recall the passion of Christ. Perhaps, it was a special food, the people's way of bidding a deceased family member good-bye. Or perhaps, it was a food that symbolized the hope of life after death, since it was served during Lent.

Cooking *antala* demands patience and a lot of care. A slow wood fire is started and protected overhead by a canopy known as a *tolda* that is propped up by four huge bamboo poles sunk securely into the ground. The *malagkit* is washed three times and put in a *kawa* filled with *kakang-gata*, the first milk extracted from a coconut. First-class white sugar is added by hand to the mixture. When every ingredient has combined thoroughly, *pandan* leaves are buried into the middle of the mixture. Banana leaves, on the other hand, will be placed on top covering the *antala* mix. Then the *kawa* is placed over the fire. "*Sinaing*," Inang Handra called the process of cooking *antala*. It is one *sinaing* that I always thought took forever.

CAMUA

When the rice grains in the *kawa* start to break (*pumuputok*) and the *gata* is almost dry, the *antala* is then carefully but continuously mixed by two men, each using a *siyense* or long cast iron ladle. "Don't let the bottom stick to the *kawa*," Inang Handra would admonish the cooks. Watching from the sidelines, I wondered how the cooks could endure the mixing and the heat from the *kalang kahoy*. From time to time, Inang would stop the cooks, take a spoonful of the rice, rub the grain between her fingers and taste to check its doneness. Even when she was 75 years old, Inang was still in full control of her kitchen.

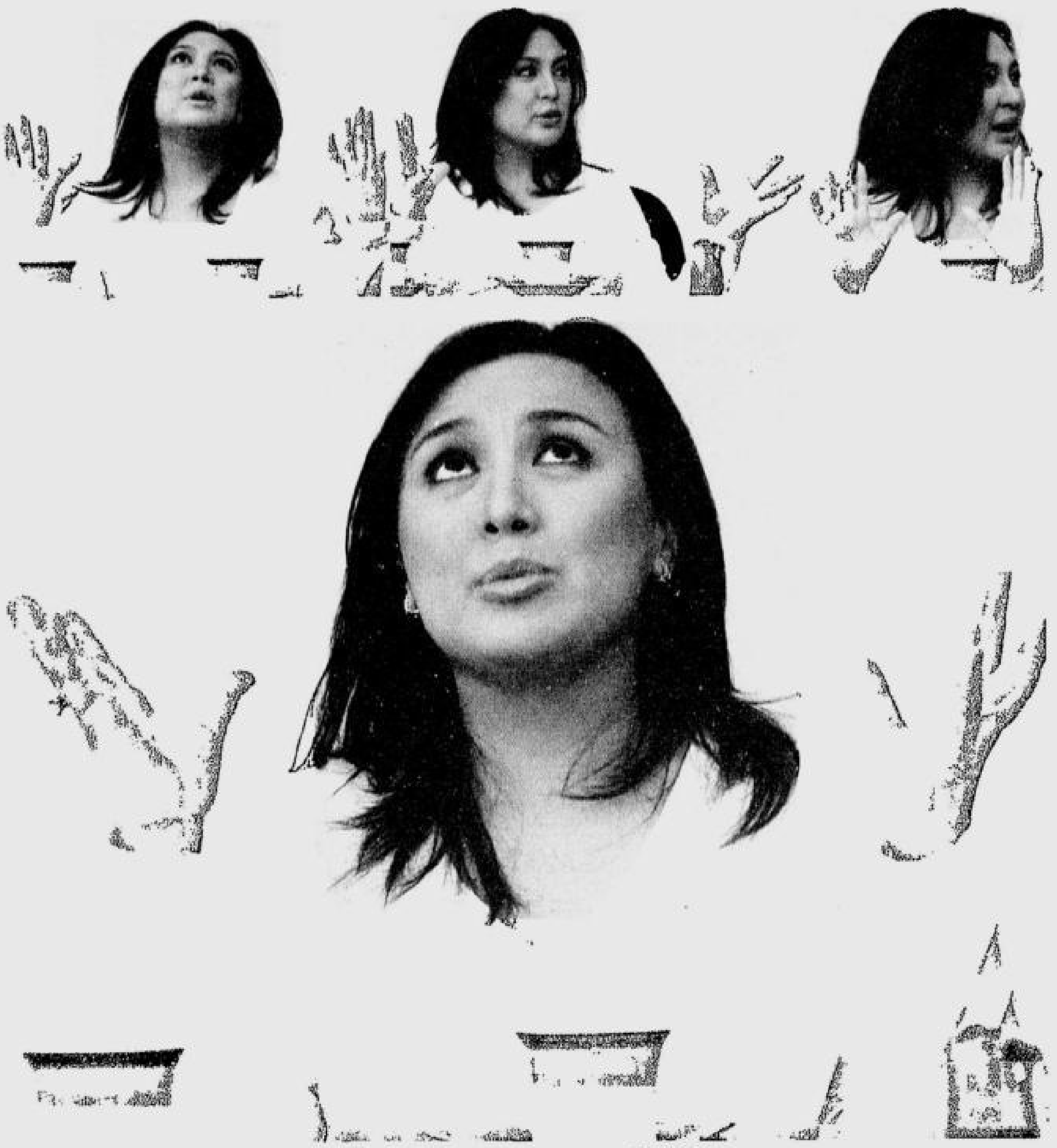
In the meantime, my cousins and I would play *pitik-bulag* or *sungka* in the vicinity, waiting for Inang Handra's signal—the tasting! Each child would be given a spoon of *antala*. Is the sweetness right? It must be *tamang-tama lang*. Is it too dry? The texture must be *mamasa-masa*, neither wet nor dry. But regardless of our opinions, Inang was the perfect cook with a gut feel for whatever she was doing in her kitchen!

When done, *antala* is put on banana-leaf-lined food trays and offered to guests along with saucers of white sugar. *Antala* is eaten by hand, and slowly dipped into the sugar before every bite. The aroma and taste of the *gata*, the *pandan* and the banana leaves are like a symphony out of Inang's kitchen, teasing one's taste buds with the stickiness and richness of this simple *kakanin*—the *antala* of my youth.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

sms feedback: Inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 283 (Smart)
or email us at pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph



FUN SNAPS FROM 2006

A SHOW OF HANDS. WHEN MEGASTAR Sharon Cuneta visited the INQUIRER, she was complimented about her "beautiful" hands. Her response? "Good thing I just had a manicure! They're a mommy's hands now. I cook. I bake." As she flung 'em here and there, photographer Jim Guiao Punzalan aimed and fired away. Those are also very giving hands, but she'd rather not talk about her pet causes. She did tell us this story, though: "I watched 'Ginang Milyonarya' a lot when I was a kid. On that TV show, Lola Chichay had a trusted driver, played by Rudy Manlapaz. He'd tell her about people who needed help and she would send an attaché case full of cash. But it was all kept a secret. I guess that show influenced me." She would love to play that role onscreen, she said. But the title may have to be changed to … "Ginang Mega"?

TURN YOUR BEDROOM INTO A STUDIO

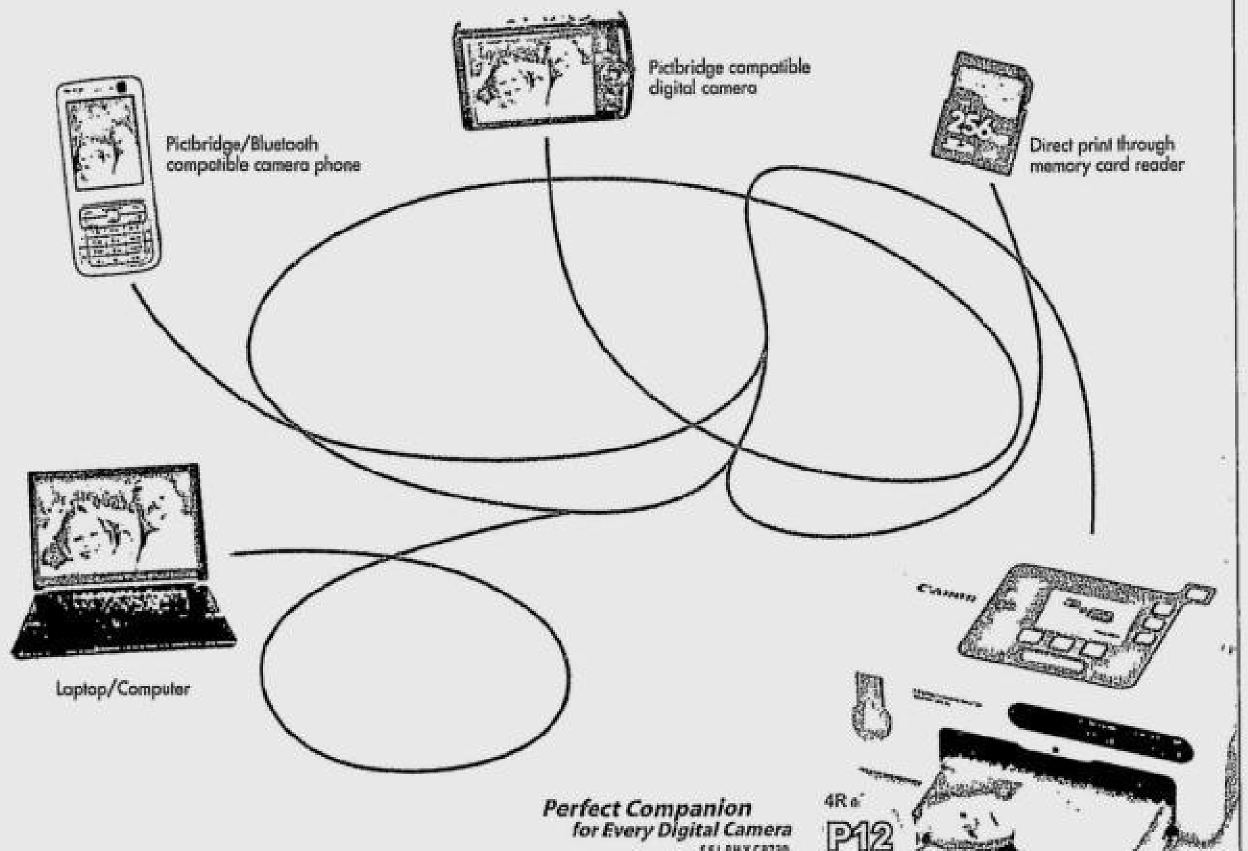
electronics depot

Robinson's Galleria 634.5554 • Robinson's Manila 302.0418 • SM Mega Mall 633.3261
Festival Mall 775.0595 • Alimall 995.0397 • Park Square 1, Makati 752.7066
More models at the store or visit www.behringer.com

SELPHY
COMPACT PHOTO PRINTER

Canon
Delighting You Always

Find out which device connects to the Canon SELPHY.


Pictbridge/Bluetooth compatible camera phone
Pictbridge compatible digital camera
Direct print through memory card reader
Laptop/Computer
4R
P12

Perfect Companion for Every Digital Camera
SELPHY CP730

shoot 1 connect 2 print 3 Camera phones, memory cards, computers, even any digital camera. If you have a picture in it, the SELPHY compact photo printers can print it within 60 seconds. Simply transfer your photos through its Pictbridge USB cable, memory card reader, or the optional Bluetooth adapter. It's that easy to make someone happy! Visit your nearest Canon dealer and find out more about SELPHY. PictBridge

Canon Marketing (Philippines), Inc 2/F Marvin Plaza, 2153 Don Chino Roces Ave. cor. V.A. Rufino St., Makati City. Tel: 844 9000 Fax: 810 9797 E-mail: info@canon.com.ph or www.canon.com.ph

SMART Buddy Ang Saya!

Para mas dama ang Christmas greeting mo, Mag-

SMART Buddy VoiceTXT 15

Text V15 to 8990 na!

Ang iyong greeting, pwede na [illegible] with your voice at ipadala.

Ang pinadalhan mo ay makakatanggap ng text kung paano nila mare-retrieve ang VoiceTXT.

To listen to a VoiceTxt message, just dial 7990

Sa VoiceTXT15 meron kang sampung 30-sec. VoiceTXT messages for only ₱15— as low as ₱1.50 lang!
Madami kang mapapadalang VoiceTXT messages kaya super sulit ka!

Plus, may chance ka pa to be one of
165 winners ng ₱30 load araw-araw
for 60 days!

Para makasali, mag-register lang by texting
REG <name/address/birthdate> to 8970
Ex. REG val perez /valero cor herrera street makati/12-25-83

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS MOVIE GUIDE

CINEMA ACCESS
635-5555
FOR ALL BRANCHES

www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

GALLERIA 632-9116

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3 • THX
2 KASALI, KASAL, KASALO
3 LIGALIG
4 ZSA ZSA ZATURRNAH
5 TATLONG BARAHA
6 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
7 MANO PO 5
8 SUPER NOYPI
9 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
10 SHAKE, RATLLE AND ROLL 8

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 KASALI, KASAL, KASALO
2 LIGALIG
3 ZSA ZSA ZATURRNAH
4 TATLONG BARAHA
5 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
7 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 8

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 KASALI, KASAL, KASALO
2 LIGALIG
3 ZSA ZSA ZATURRNAH
4 TATLONG BARAHA
5 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
6 MANO PO 5
7 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
8 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 8

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 8
2 SUPER NOYPI
3 MANO PO 5
4 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
5 TATLONG BARAHA
6 ZSA ZSA ZATURRNAH
7 LIGALIG
8 KASALI, KASAL, KASALO

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 SUPER NOYPI
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 8
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
4 ZSA ZSA ZATURRNAH

Watch and Win an ALL-YEAR-ROUND Robinsons Movieworld Cinema Card!!!

Robinsons Movieworld will give away one (1) cinema card to the 100 cash prize winners of the "Cash sa Pelikula" raffle promo provided that they have watched at least 3 movies at any Robinsons Movieworld Branch.

BEST
MS. GEMMA PLUGIO

PROMO PERIOD:
December 25, 2006 to January 05, 2007

NCAP MBC MMDA

See Posters for more details

Per DTI-NCR Permit #5517, Series of 2006

STA. ROSA (049) 837-0907

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 KASALI, KASAL, KASALO
3 MANO PO 5
4 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 8
5 ZSA ZSA ZATURRNAH

LIPA (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 KASALI, KASAL, KASALO
3 MANO PO 5
4 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 8
5 SUPER NOYPI

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332

1 MANO PO 5
2 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 8
3 SUPER NOYPI
4 KASALI, KASAL, KASALO

ANGELES (045) 892-2346

1 MANO PO 5
2 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 8
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 KASALI, KASAL, KASALO

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL
2 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
3 TATLONG BARAHA
4 ZSA ZSA ZATURRNAH
5 LIGALIG
6 KASALI, KASAL, KASALO

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-5270

1 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 8
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 SUPER NOYPI
4 MANO PO 5
5 LIGALIG
6 KASALI, KASAL, KASALO

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 KASALI, KASAL, KASALO
3 MANO PO 5
4 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 8
5 SUPER NOYPI
6 THE NATIVITY STORY

ILOILO (033) 336-8070

1 ZSA ZSA ZATURRNAH
2 TATLONG BARAHA
3 MANO PO 5
4 SUPER NOYPI
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 8

MOVIE PASS
MOVIE PASS

The
Perfect Gift
All Year Round

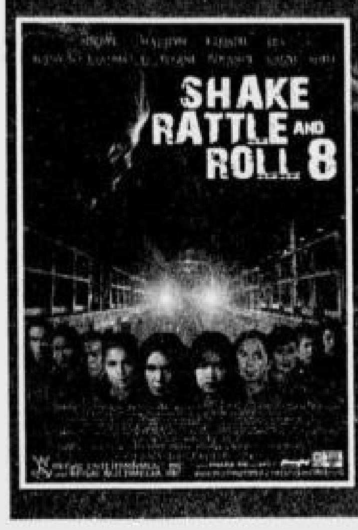
A Pre Paid Movie Pass to the Hottest Seats in town.

Get Special discounts for volume purchases!

For marketing and events/reservations please call. Marketing Services Department at 395-2188 locs. 230 and 240

SM CINEMA
SHARE A MOVIE WITH A LOVED ONE

moviętime SHOWTIME
SM DIAL-A-MOVIE 833-9999*
Your life as a movie
BIG MOVIES • BIG STARS • BIG SHOWS • BIG EVENTS



SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 8

From the scream-worthy "Shake, Rattle & Roll" series comes another trilogy:

"13/F", a group of party organizers arrange a children's party at the 13th floor of a new condominium that eventually take a creepy turn;

"Yaya", a naughty kid named Benjo discovers that their new nanny is a vampire, but no one believes him; and

"LRT", passengers find themselves stranded in the station and soon after, a horrifying creature coming out of nowhere is hell-bent on chasing them.

The 32nd Metro Manila Film Festival – Philippines 2006

NOW SHOWING at SM Cinema nationwide

METRO MANILA

SM MALL OF ASIA 556-0104

IMAX

T-REX IN 3D
11:00AM 12:15PM 4:00PM 7:45PM
Admission Price P200

SANTA VS SNOWMAN IN 3D
1:30PM 2:45PM 5:15PM 6:30PM 9:00PM 10:15
Admission Price P200

1 LIGALIG
2 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
3 TATLONG BARAHA
4 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
5 MANO PO 5
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 3

PREMIERE CINEMA
SUPER NOYPI

CENTERSTAGE
SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

PODIUM

CINEMA 1
ENTENG KABISOTE 3

CINEMA 2
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
633-8976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 MANO PO 5
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 LIGALIG
6 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
7 TATLONG BARAHA
8 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
9 MANO PO 5
10 SUPER NOYPI
11 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
12 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 LIGALIG
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 MANO PO 5
5 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
6 TATLONG BARAHA
7 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
8 MANO PO 5
9 SUPER NOYPI
10 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
11 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
12 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 LIGALIG
3 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
4 TATLONG BARAHA
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 MANO PO 5
7 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
8 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
9 MANO PO 5
10 SUPER NOYPI
11 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
12 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 LIGALIG
4 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
5 TATLONG BARAHA
6 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
7 MANO PO 5
8 SUPER NOYPI
9 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
10 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488

1 LIGALIG
2 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
3 TATLONG BARAHA
4 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
5 MANO PO 5
6 SUPER NOYPI

SM CITY SOUTHMALL 806-6888

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 LIGALIG
3 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
4 TATLONG BARAHA
5 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
6 MANO PO 5
7 SUPER NOYPI
8 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
9 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
3 TATLONG BARAHA
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 LIGALIG
3 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
5 TATLONG BARAHA
6 MANO PO 5
7 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
8 MANO PO 5
9 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
10 SUPER NOYPI
11 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
12 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 MANO PO 5
4 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917

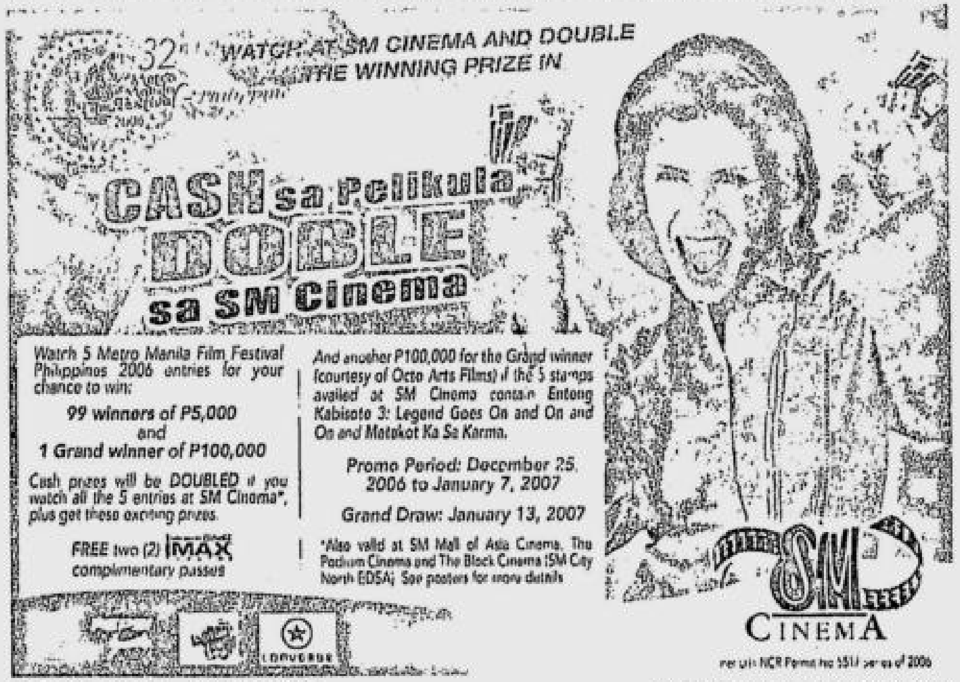
1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 LIGALIG
3 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
4 TATLONG BARAHA

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975

1 LIGALIG
2 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
3 MANO PO 5
4 SUPER NOYPI

moviętime PROMO

Watch and Win at SM Cinema


32nd
WATCH AT SM CINEMA AND DOUBLE THE WINNING PRIZE IN
CASH sa Pelikula DOBLE sa SM Cinema
SM CINEMA

Watch 5 Metro Manila Film Festival Philippines 2006 entries for your chance to win:

99 winners of P5,000
and
1 Grand winner of P100,000

Cash prizes will be DOUBLED if you watch all the 5 entries at SM Cinema*, plus get these exciting prizes.

FREE two (2) IMAX complimentary passes

And another P100,000 for the Grand winner (courtesy of Octo Arts Films) if the 5 stamps availed at SM Cinema contain Enteng Kabisote 3: Legend Goes On and On and On and Matakot Ka Sa Karma.

Promo Period: December 25, 2006 to January 7, 2007

Grand Draw: January 13, 2007

*Also valid at SM Mall of Asia Cinema, The Podium Cinema and The Block Cinema (SM City North EDSA). See posters for more details

Per DTI-NCR Permit No 5511 series of 2006

LUZON

SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
3 TATLONG BARAHA
4 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
5 MANO PO 5
6 SUPER NOYPI
7 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
8 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45

1 MANO PO 5
2 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 SUPER NOYPI
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 TATLONG BARAHA

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 SUPER NOYPI
4 MANO PO 5

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-8401-04

1 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 MANO PO 5

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)0037681-85

1 SUPER NOYPI
2 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
3 TATLONG BARAHA
4 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
5 LIGALIG
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CIY LIPA (043) 756-7925

1 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 TATLONG BARAHA

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 MANO PO 5
3 LIGALIG
4 TATLONG BARAHA

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)0107838-39

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
3 LIGALIG
4 TATLONG BARAHA

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 SUPER NOYPI
3 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
4 MANO PO 5

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5341205-08

1 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
2 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876

1 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 SUPER NOYPI
4 MANO PO 5
5 TATLONG BARAHA
6 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
7 LIGALIG
8 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 SUPER NOYPI
3 MANO PO 5
4 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
5 TATLONG BARAHA
6 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
7 LIGALIG
8 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
3 TATLONG BARAHA
4 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
5 MANO PO 5
6 HAPPY FEET

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884

1 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
2 MANO PO 5
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

*FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

ROUNDUP

Best website

GMANews.TV (www.gmanews.tv), the official website of GMA News and Public Affairs, was recently named Best Web Site in the Media category in the 9th Philippine Web Awards at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium, RCBC Plaza in Makati.

The award was received by GMANews.TV editor in chief Malou Mangahas and managing editor Jose Torres Jr.

Mangahas' acceptance speech—"*Sa Pilipino, sa buong mundo*, GMANews.TV, *serbisyong totoo, bente-kwatro oras* (To Filipinos all over the world, GMANews.TV, true service, 24 hours daily)"—was also chosen Best 10-Word Speech of the night.

The organizers had set a 10-word limit on acceptance speeches by winners.

Film seminar

The Communication Foundation for Asia will hold a seminar titled "Film and Faith" on Jan. 15-17 at the CFA Auditorium, 4427 Old Sta. Mesa, Manila.

Fr. Peter Malone, an Australian Missionary of the Sacred Heart and internationally recognized educator and film critic, is the resource person.

Father Malone will focus on two main topics—"Jesus in Cinema and Christ-Figures" and "Pastoral Use of Cinema."

The seminar is open to media educators, communication students, catechists and film enthusiasts.

Call 714-7233 or 713-2732.

Gold record

The newly released album "Transit" from Sponge Cola has been certified gold by the Philippine Association of the Record Industry (Pari).

The gold record award was given to the band at ABS-CBN's Sunday noontime show "ASAP '06" by Universal Records general manger Kathleen Dy Go.

The album carries the hit single "Bitiw," the theme song of the TV-fantasy series "Komiks Presents: Da Adventures of Pedro Penduko."

MARK HERRAS

Hit album

The "Mark Herras Dance Party" album has been certified gold and is on its way to the platinum mark.

The new album has Miggy Eugenio and Marky Cielo as guest performers in the music video of its first single, "Crazy Pipe (Pump It, Rock It)."

Mark Herras' first album, "Mark Herras Dance Hits," has been certified double platinum.

Mark received his new gold record award from Universal Record's general manager Kathleen Dy Go in GMA's "SOP," where he is a mainstay.

Rites of passage in show business

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

TALENTS HAVE A HARD TIME ATTAINING stardom—and have to work even harder to sustain their stellar status for years, and hopefully even decades.

To do this, they have to successfully go through the regulation rites of passage that the biz requires its stellar survivors to undergo.

For child stars, the first big test comes when adolescence looms. As they shoot up, their voices change and their bodies develop, they are deemed to be less innocent and cute than they used to be, so new offers are reduced to a trickle, then dry up.

For two or three years, the adolescent star either drops out completely, or plays the occasional role, just to let his fans know that he hasn't been totally consigned to business' version of Limbo.

Then, the former child star reemerges from the cocoon and chrysalis of adolescence, to vie once more for viewers' approval, this time as a young pre-teen or teen star.

These days, that risky but unavoidable rite of passage has been made even dodgier by the decision of some former child stars to reinvent themselves as—sexy nymphets!

Their mentors feel that the biz has become so competitive and crowded with so many other young talents that only the spiciest has any hope of surviving.

This notion is wrong-headed, of course, because any number of teen stars have sustained their popularity without reducing their wardrobe to a series of itty-bitty bikinis—yellow, polka-dotted or otherwise.

But it's far easier to generate artificial heat and controversy just by stripping, so many teen idols and hopefuls have come out in "for-adults" magazine pictorials, disporting themselves in all sorts of wee swimwear, without the excuse of even a drop of water in sight.

It's a good thing that the hot pictorials usually lead to the young ecdysiasts' being cast in sexy flicks that aren't really daring as earlier feared by the teen's nervous stage parents.

The name of the currently trendy game is Titillation, pure and simple, which is why more and more nubile young women have agreed to play it.

Truth to tell, it's a younger and more in-your-face version of the choice and change that the likes of other former child stars like **Vilma Santos** had to make when their own post-teen careers were going nowhere fast.

In Vilma's case, things weren't as dire as all that, but she couldn't abide by the fact that she was perforce having to play second fiddle to the phenomenal **Nora Aunor**, who was winning the most prestigious awards left and right.

This really rankled because, truth to tell, Vilma was occasionally coming up with even more "awardable" performances, but she was being passed up because all eyes then were on Nora.

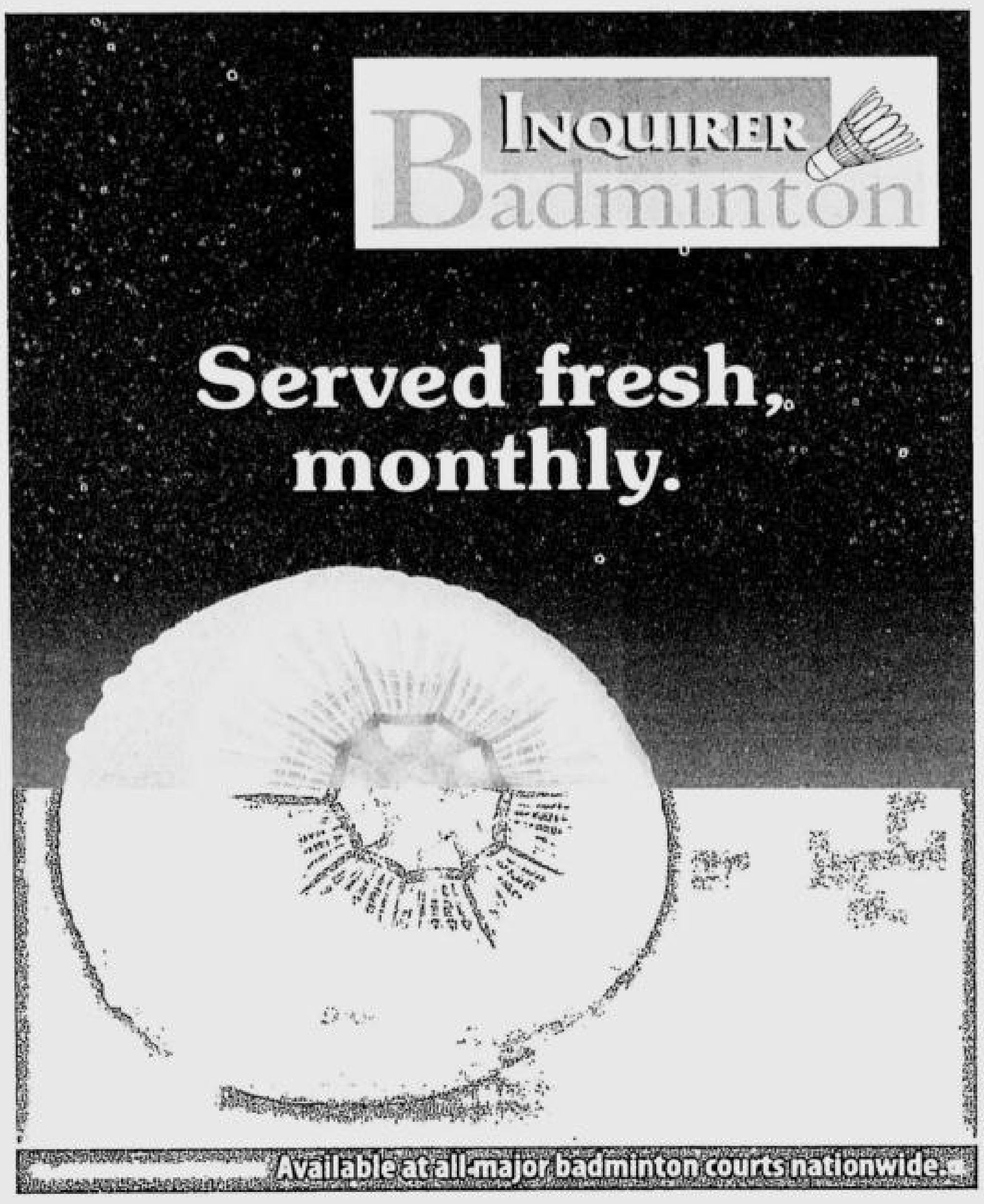
So, to make her own distinct mark on the big screen, Vilma asked herself: What wouldn't Nora be able to do, or didn't want to go into? Answer: sexy, young-adult roles. So, that's the direction the always logical Vilma took.

Starting with "Burlesque Queen," she blew the socks off moviegoers' feet with her audacious portrayals of young women on the edge, even as Nora was still making hay with her "safe" teen musicals, drama and comic romps.

Soon enough, viewers, critics and producers took note of the "new and bolder" Vilma, and rewarded her with roles and awards in profitable profusion.

Flashforward three decades, and today's former child and teen stars are also through that rite of passage to young-adult roles. What goes around, comes around—only the bikinis are getting skimpier!

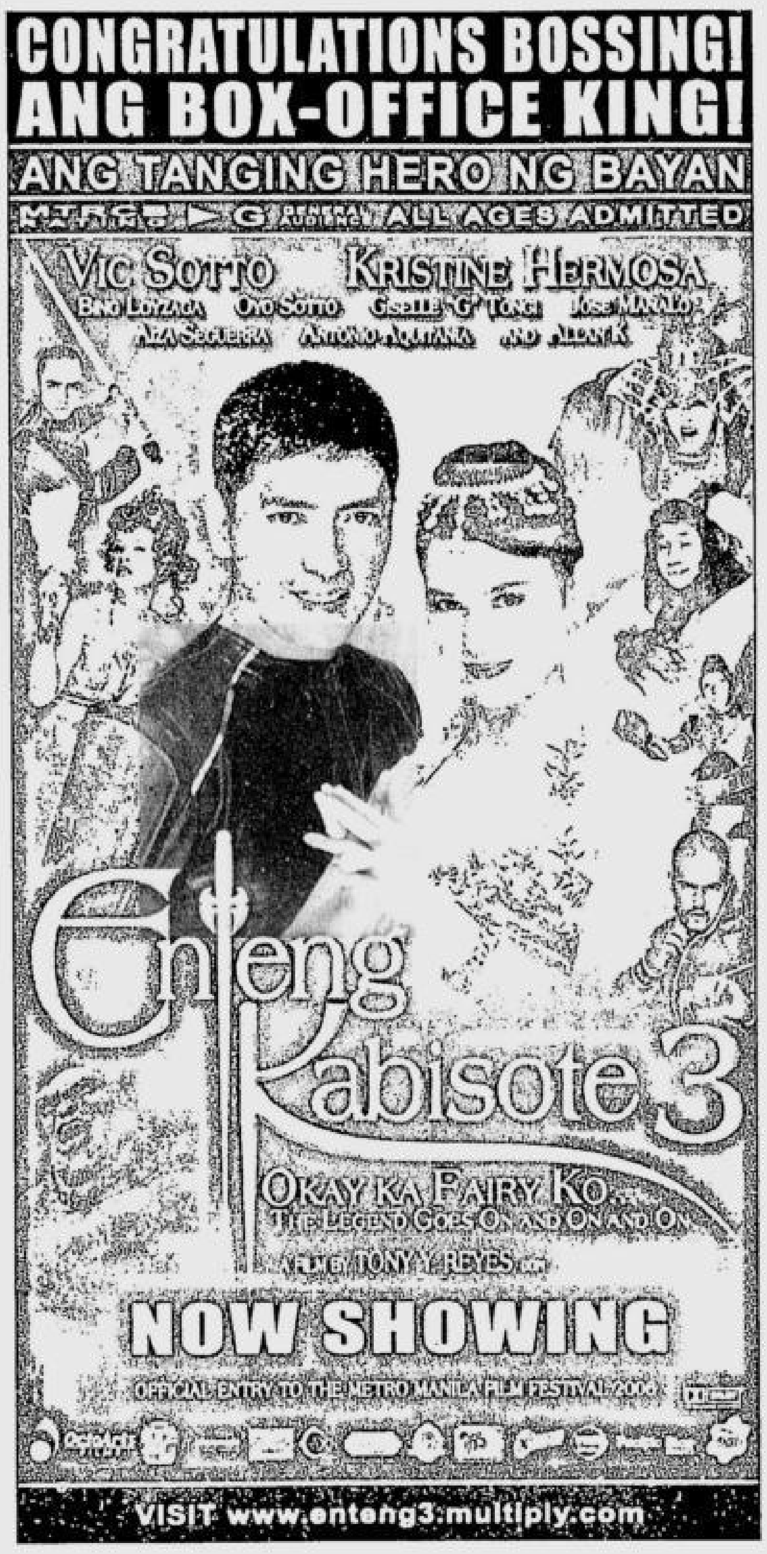
And, after young-adult roles? The risks get even bigger, as established romantic leads have to eventually face the diminishing prospects—first, of mother roles then of non-stars and supporting parts, and finally, for the really durable stars of grandmother roles. At every key junction, a new rite of passage has to be undergone. The Piper must be periodically paid.



INQUIRER Badminton

Served fresh, monthly.

Available at all major badminton courts nationwide.



CONGRATULATIONS BOSSING!
ANG BOX-OFFICE KING!
ANG TANGING HERO NG BAYAN
MTRCB G GENERAL AUDIENCE ALL AGES ADMITTED
VIC SOTTO KRISTINE HERMOSA
BING LOYZAGA OYO SOTTO GISELLE "G" TONGI JOSE MANALO
AIZA SEGUERRA ANTONIO AQUITANIA AND ALLAN K.
Enteng Kabisote 3
OKAY KA FAIRY KO...
THE LEGEND GOES ON AND ON AND ON
A FILM BY TONY Y. REYES
NOW SHOWING
OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2006
VISIT www.enteng3.multiply.com

glorietta GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN AYALA CENTER CEBU MARKET! MARKET! Ayala Malls

AT THE CINEMAS

THX

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729 7777

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G1 GLORIETTA 1	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8	ENTENG KABISOTE 3	ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH	LIGALIG			
G4 GLORIETTA 4	KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	LIGALIG	THX TATLONG BARAHA GUARANTEED SEATS	MATAKOT KA SA KARMA	MANO PO 5	SUPER NOYPI	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
GB1 GREENBELT 1	ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH	ENTENG KABISOTE 3					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	THX SUPER NOYPI GUARANTEED SEATS	THX MANO PO 5 GUARANTEED SEATS	MATAKOT KA SA KARMA GUARANTEED SEATS	TATLONG BARAHA GUARANTEED SEATS	KASAL, KASALI, KASALO GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	THX MATAKOT KA SA KARMA GUARANTEED SEATS	MANO PO 5	SUPER NOYPI	ENTENG KABISOTE 3	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8		
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	SUPER NOYPI	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8	ENTENG KABISOTE 3	MATAKOT KA SA KARMA			
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8	ENTENG KABISOTE 3	SUPER NOYPI	MANO PO 5	ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH		

At the Activity Center

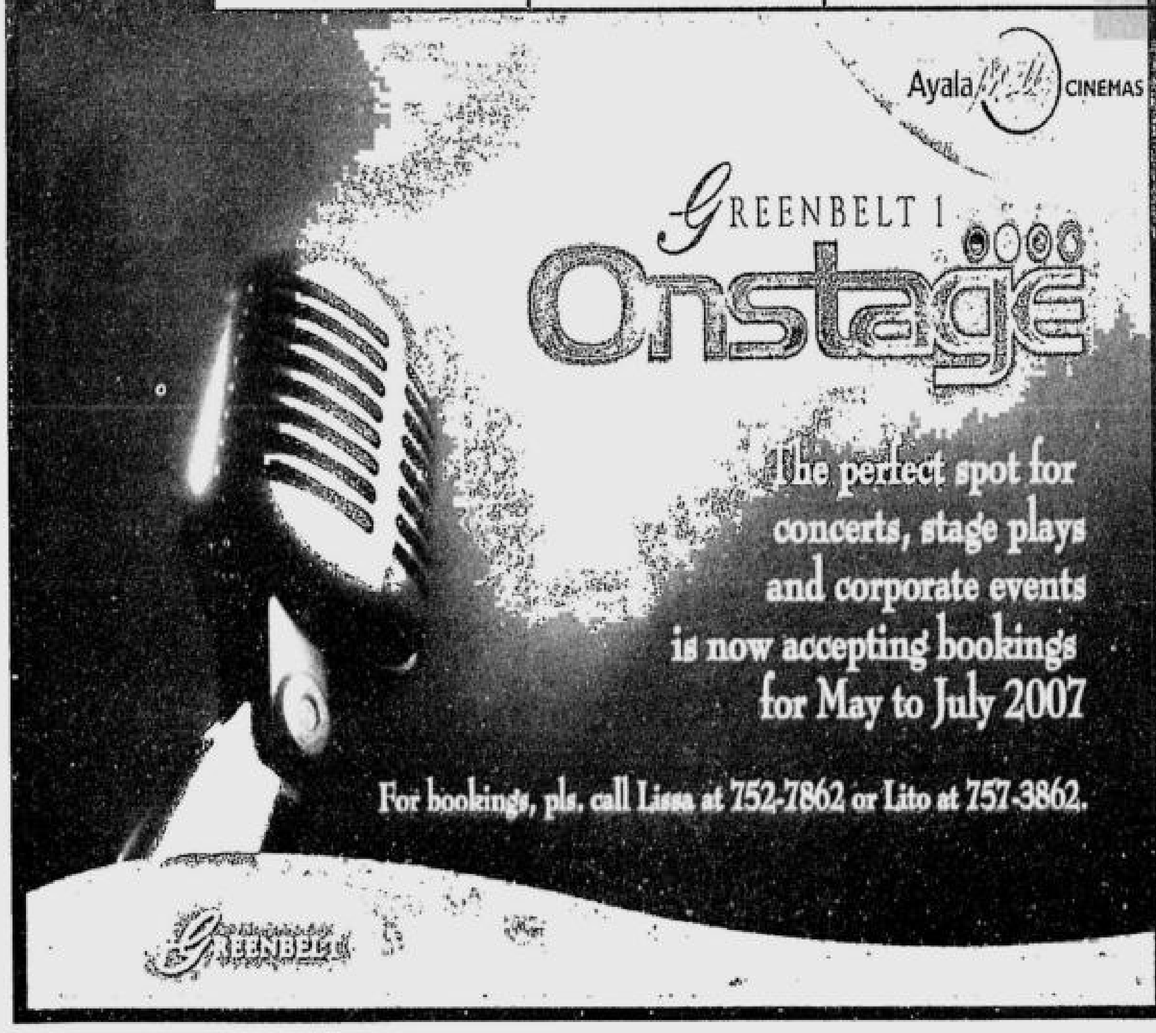
Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 9pm
Greenbelt - 757 4853, from 11am to 9pm
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Globe Event December 22 to 24, 2006	Anson Exhibit December 11 to 22, 2006
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Stepstones Learning Center Christmas Presentation December 21, 2006	Radyoke Challenge: Grand Finals December 30, 2006

GREENBELT
Holiday Harmonies with the Philippine Madrigal Singers
December 23, 2006

Greenbelt 1 Onstage
ONSTAGE - The perfect spot for concerts, stage plays & corporate events is now accepting bookings for May to July 2007
For bookings, pls. call Lissa at 752-7862 or Lito at 757-3862

Ayala MUSEUM
19th - 20th Century Philippine Art from Ayala Museum Collection
On-going until January 2007
For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org



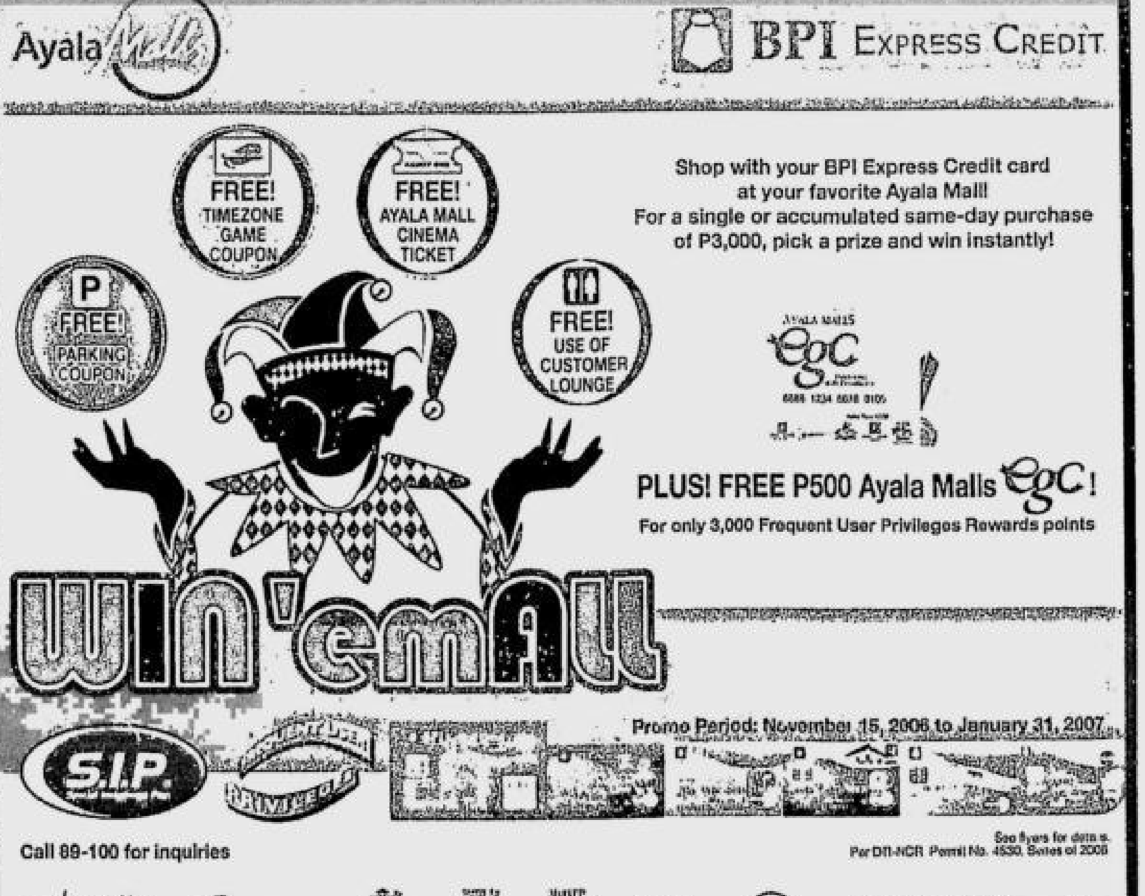
Ayala Malls CINEMAS

GREENBELT 1 Onstage

The perfect spot for concerts, stage plays and corporate events is now accepting bookings for May to July 2007

For bookings, pls. call Lissa at 752-7862 or Lito at 757-3862.

GREENBELT



Ayala Malls

BPI EXPRESS CREDIT

FREE! TIMEZONE GAME COUPON
FREE! AYALA MALL CINEMA TICKET
FREE! PARKING COUPON
FREE! USE OF CUSTOMER LOUNGE

Shop with your BPI Express Credit card at your favorite Ayala Mall!
For a single or accumulated same-day purchase of P3,000, pick a prize and win instantly!

PLUS! FREE P500 Ayala Malls eGC!
For only 3,000 Frequent User Privileges Rewards points

WIN 'EM ALL

Promo Period: November 15, 2006 to January 31, 2007

S.I.P.

Call 89-100 for inquiries

See flyers for details.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4530, Series of 2006

glorietta GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN CENTER AYALA CENTER CEBU MARKET! MARKET! Ayala Malls CINEMAS BPI We'll take you farther.

He gave peace a chance

DID YOU KNOW...

LOS ANGELES—THE FBI HAS released its final surveillance documents on John Lennon to a university historian who has waged a 25-year legal battle to obtain the secret files.

The 10 pages contain new details about Lennon's ties to leftist and anti-war groups in London in the early 1970s, but nothing indicating government officials considered the former Beatle a serious threat, historian Jon Wiener told the Los Angeles Times in Wednesday's editions.

The documents include a surveillance report stating that two prominent British leftists had courted Lennon in hopes that he would finance "a left-wing bookshop and reading room in London" but that Lennon gave them no money. Another page states that there was "no certain proof" that Lennon had provided money "for subversive purposes." *AP*

Morgan Freeman rethinks H'wood business models

NEW YORK—JUST TWO WEEKS AFTER "10 Items or Less" opens in theaters Friday, it will be available for digital download from Clickstar, a company that Morgan Freeman's production company and Intel have founded to bring small movies to those who live far from boutique cinemas.

What's Freeman doing rethinking Hollywood's business models?

"I'm just a firm believer that things continue to grow, get better," the 69-year-old actor says in his deep, distinctive voice.

Freeman seems more full of life—both onscreen and off—than ever.

At his home in Clarksdale, Mississippi, where he lives with his wife of 12 years, he's an avid pilot, sailor and owns a blues club and a restaurant.

He has more than a half-dozen films either finished or in preproduction. Freeman's esteemed career— which has spanned "Driving Miss Daisy, "Glory," "The Shawshank Redemption," "Se7en" and last year's "March of the Penguins"—shows no signs of slowing down.

Pigeonholing

Moviegoers are accustomed to seeing Freeman's weary eyes exude gravitas and dignity in films—a kind of pigeonholing Freeman has long yearned to break free of. In "10 Items or Less," he's a clearly lighter presence.

The film, directed by Brad Silberling, is a short, independent movie about independent movies. Freeman's character is an actor who has been out of the movie biz for four years who's considering signing onto "a little independent thing."

He researches the prospective part by observing a grocery store checkout girl (Paz Vega). The two quickly forge a friendship and spend a pivotal day together.

While "10 Items or Less"—a modest film of 82 minutes, shot in 15 days—is best viewed on the big screen (like all movies), its smallness makes a computer screen a reasonable viewing station. Perhaps more importantly, it's not a film that will play at most multiplexes or in rural areas.

Stable platform

It's a familiar problem to Freeman.

"Where I live, in my town, there's no movie house," he says. "There are many, many, many, many people who don't have access."

Freeman and his production partner, Lori McCreary, founded Revelations Entertainment in 1996—three years after Freeman's lone directing effort, "Bopha!"

"I want to have control over making films. I really do," says Freeman.

After Napster and online downloading changed the music industry, Freeman and McCreary began considering how Hollywood could head off similar problems—discussions that Intel eventually joined.

"And we came up with the idea of distributing movies via the Internet on a stable platform, on something that you can control," Freeman says.

The idea isn't new; Movielink.com, for one, offers movies digitally for purchase and rental (with a viewing period of 24 hours). What makes Clickstar unique is that it's offering first-run movies.

MORGAN/ E5

CHEER FACTOR

Indecent exposure

WASHINGTON—The US Federal Communications Commission late last week defended its decision to fine 20 CBS Corp. television stations $550,000 for airing a brief breast flash by pop singer Janet Jackson.

The agency rejected CBS' argument that Jackson's performance during the live 2004 Super Bowl football halftime show did not violate decency standards that restrict nudity on broadcast television.

Fellow pop singer Justin Timberlake ripped off part of Jackson's bustier exposing her breast for less than a second during the show. Despite the brevity, lawmakers and regulators were outraged and vowed a crackdown on broadcast indecency. *Reuters*

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SM Cineplex
1 LIGALIG
2 ZSA ZSA ZATURNAH
3 TATLONG BARAHA
4 SUPER NOYPI
PREMIERE
CLOSED

Masagana Cinema (Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
3 SHAKE, RATTLE, & ROLL

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
2 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA

Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
2 SUPER NOYPI
3 MANO PO - 5
4 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA

Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 LIGALIG (BATANG MAYNILA)
3 TATLONG BARAHA
4 SHAKE, RATTLE, & ROLL - 8

Centre Plaza Cinema (Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
2 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA

Eastwood Cinemas
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 LIGALIG (BATANG MAYNILA)
2 SUPER NOYPI
3 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
4 SHAKE, RATTLE, & ROLL

Starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7268150
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 MANO PO - 3
5 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA

Metropolis Star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504286, 5433994
1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 LIGALIG (BATANG MAYNILA)
3 ZSA ZSA ZATURNAH
4 TATLONG BARAHA

Cinema 2000 Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 SHAKE, RATTLE, & ROLL
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
4

Theatres
1 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 MANO PO - 3

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall (Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 MANO PO - 3
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-6271
1 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
2 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
3 RESRVED
4 RESRVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix (Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL

Cinema 2000 Metrotown (Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL
3 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
4 MANO PO - 3

Filinvest Festival Cinema
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 SHAKE, RATTLE, & ROLL - 8
2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
3 SUPER NOYPI
4 MANO PO - 3
5 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
6 TATLONG BARAHA
7 ZSA ZSA ZATURNAH
8 LIGALIG (BATANG MAYNILA)
9 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
10 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL
2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3

Lianas Cinema (Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
2 SUPER NOYPI

Blue Wave Mall Union
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 MANO PO - 5
2 TALTLONG BARAHA
3 ZSA ZSA ZATURNAH
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

Lianas Cinema (Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 TATLONG BARAHA
2 ZSA ZSA ZATURNAH
3 LIGALIG (BATANG MAYNILA)
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

Lianas MovieCity (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 SHAKE RATTLE 7 ROLL
4 LIGALIG (BATANG MAYNILA)
5 MANO PO - 5

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228
1 SHAKE, RATTLE, & ROLL
2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
3 SUPER NOYPI
4 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

Fiesta World Mall (Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 MANO PO - 5
2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 SHAKE RATTLE 7 ROLL

The Marketplace
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 SHAKE, RATTLE, & ROLL
2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
3 MANO PO - 5
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

Berma Cinema (Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
2 LIGALIG (BATANG MAYNILA)

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41 DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

SHAKE RATTLLE & ROLL 8 PG13 1:45,4:30,7:15,10:00	ENTENG KABISOTE 3 G 1:10,3:30,5:50,8:10,10:30	SUPER NOYPI G 12:40,3:05,5:30,7:55,10:20
MANO PO 5	MATAKOT KA SA KARMA PG13 1:30,3:40,5:50,8:00,10:10	TATLO BARAHA PG13

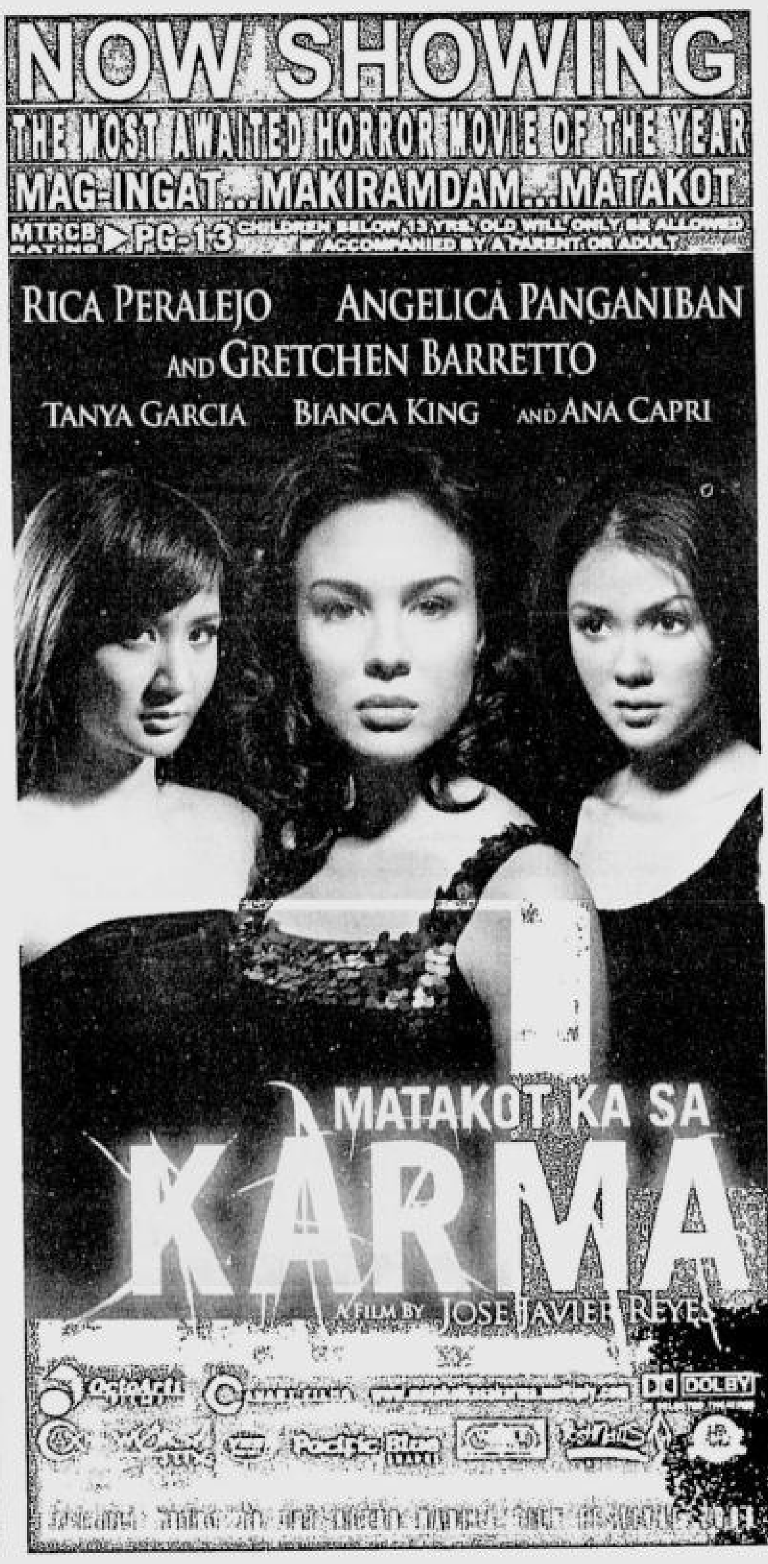
MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898-1440/41

MAGIC 89.9 & Eastwood City present
New Year's Countdown to 2007
Street Party with a Spectacular Fireworks Display
Dec. 31, 2006 • 8pm onwards
Eastwood Central Plaza

EASTWOOD CINEMAS DOLBY DIGITAL
Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City

1	LIGALIG 2:00, 4:15, 6:30, 8:45, 10:55 R-13
2	SUPER NOYPI 12:50, 3:15, 5:50, 8:25, 11:00 G
3	ENTENG KABISOTE 3 12:50, 3:15, 5:50, 8:25, 11:00 G
4	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8 1:35, 4:30, 7:25, 10:20 PG-13

To receive Eastwood City Events, Promos and Cinema schedule just text eastwood and send to 2948 for Globe, Smart & Sun Cellular subscribers
For inquiries, call 687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE



NOW SHOWING
THE MOST AWAITED HORROR MOVIE OF THE YEAR
MAG-INGAT...MAKIRAMDAM...MATAKOT
MTRCB RATING PG-13 CHILDREN BELOW 13 YRS. OLD WILL ONLY BE ALLOWED IF ACCOMPANIED BY A PARENT OR ADULT
RICA PERALEJO ANGELICA PANGANIBAN AND GRETCHEN BARRETTO
TANYA GARCIA BIANCA KING AND ANA CAPRI
MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
A FILM BY JOSE JAVIER REYES
DOLBY
Pacific Blue

MTRCB PG-13
NOW SHOWING
LITO LAPID as Leon Guerrero
MARK LAPID as Julio Valiente
MAYNARD LAPID as Zigomar
TATLONG BARAHA
PHOEMELA BARANDA GIRLIE SEVILLA JACKIE RICE
BEARWIN MEILY AND MONSOUR DEL ROSARIO
LITO LAPID MARK LAPID VIOLETA SEVILLA TOTO NATIVIDAD
Violett FILMS
Jollibee
OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2006

ARANETA CENTER
Gateway Alimall FarmersPlaza
THE ONLY CINEPLEX IN THE COUNTRY Gateway Cineplex*10 DOLBY DIGITAL-EX

KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 1:10 / 3:20 / 5:30 / 7:40 / 9:50	SUPER NOYPI 12:20 / 2:40 / 5:00 / 7:20 / 9:40	ENTENG KABISOTE 3 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30	
LIGALIG 1:30 / 3:30 / 5:30 / 7:30 / 9:30	ZSA ZSA ZATURNAH 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 10:40 / 1:25 / 4:10 / 6:55 / 9:40	
TATLONG BARAHA 2:50 / 3:00 / 5:10 / 7:20 / 9:30	MANO PO 5	MATAKOT KA SA KARMA 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	RESERVED

ALIMALL 5

KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 12:05 / 2:15 / 4:25 / 6:35 / 8:45	LIGALIG 12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 6:30 / 8:30	ZSA ZSA ZATURNAH 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35
SUPER NOYPI 2:15 PM / 1:35 / 3:55 / 6:15 / 8:35	ENTENG KABISOTE 3 11:00 / 1:20 / 3:40 / 6:00 / 8:20	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph

ARANETA COLISEUM
CARTOON NETWORK LIVE: CARTOONIVAL
Dec. 29, 30, Jan 1, 2 & 3 - 4:00 pm & 7:30 pm
2007 WORLD SLASHER CUP INVITATIONAL 8- COCK DERBY
JANUARY 16, 18 & 20

MORGAN FREEMAN

Morgan Freeman rethinks …

He believes coded downloads is a safer avenue for distribution than DVD releases

From page E4

"10 Items or Less" will have a two-week window of a purely theatrical release, then will be available from ClickstarInc.com on Dec. 15. Freeman says its next first-run digital release will be "Lonely Hearts" (starring John Travolta and James Gandolfini) in the spring.

Other filmmakers have begun to re-examine how they release their films. Last year, Steven Soderbergh released the indie "Bubble" across three platforms over just five days: In theaters, on the high-definition cable channel HDNet, and on DVD.

Freeman, however, thinks the risk of piracy with DVDs is too great (especially in foreign countries) and that coded downloads present a safer avenue for distribution. It also helps level the playing field between independent productions and the studios.

"You can come up with money sometimes to make a film, but you can't distribute it because it costs a lot to get prints and advertising," Freeman says.

Obvious fear

The obvious fear is that digital downloads made available so close to the theatrical release could cannibalize the box office.

Silberling, whose credits include wide-release films such as "Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events" and "Moonlight Mile," thinks the Internet simply presents another audience to penetrate.

"I don't think broadband is going to shift viewing patterns," the director says. "I think hopefully people who otherwise wouldn't have seen it might now. People who like to go to that theater and get popcorn will go."

Both Freeman and Silberling think Hollywood doomsayers will be proven wrong on Internet distribution in the same way that fears of TV, VHS and DVDs all (to a certain extent) turned out to be exaggerated. They believe digital downloads present the future of home entertainment and expect it to spread prominently within a few years.

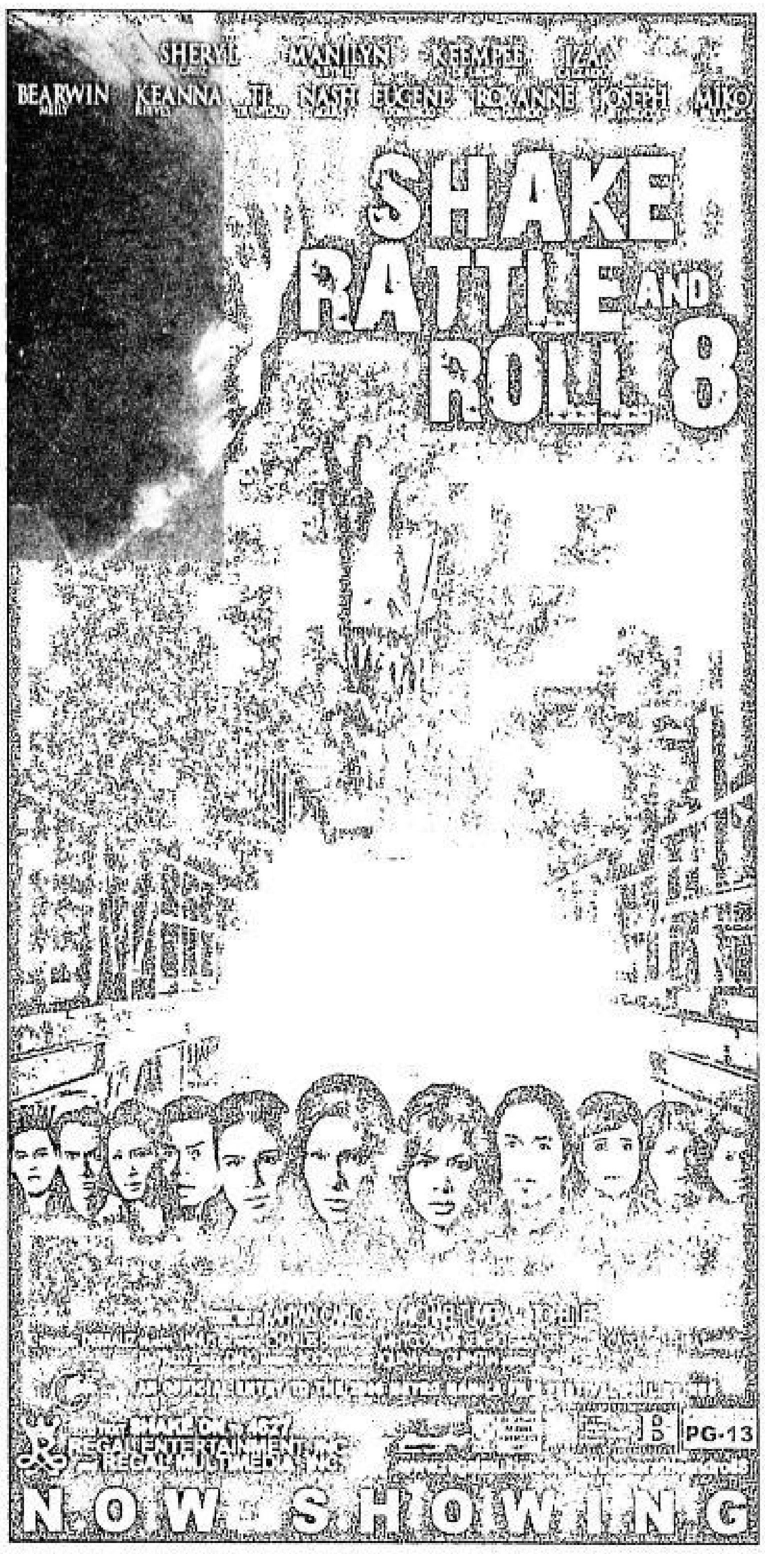
But concerns about the unknown don't bother Freeman much. He recently took up golf, and to hear him speak about it, he might just as well be discussing Clickstar.

"I'm enjoying the attempt," he says with a laugh. "I'm trying to master a new discipline, which I guess is something we should all do, anyway."

Jake Coyle, AP

SHANG CINEPLEX
① LIGALIG
MTRCB R-13
③ TATLONG BARAHA
MTRCB PG-13
② ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
MTRCB GP
④ SUPER NOYPI
MTRCB GP
PREMIERE THEATRE CLOSED
Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice
Catch the Cineplex Specials
A Blockbuster Gift for All Seasons
The Shang Cineplex Gift Certificates
Treat your family and friends to a thrilling movie experience only at the Shang.
Cinema Treats - for Cinemas 1,2,3, and 4
Premiere Rewards - for the Premiere Theatre
6th floor, Shangri-La Plaza Mall
EDSA corner Shaw Blvd. Mandaluyong City
Call 633-7851 loc. 171, 170 or 633-2227
for more details.

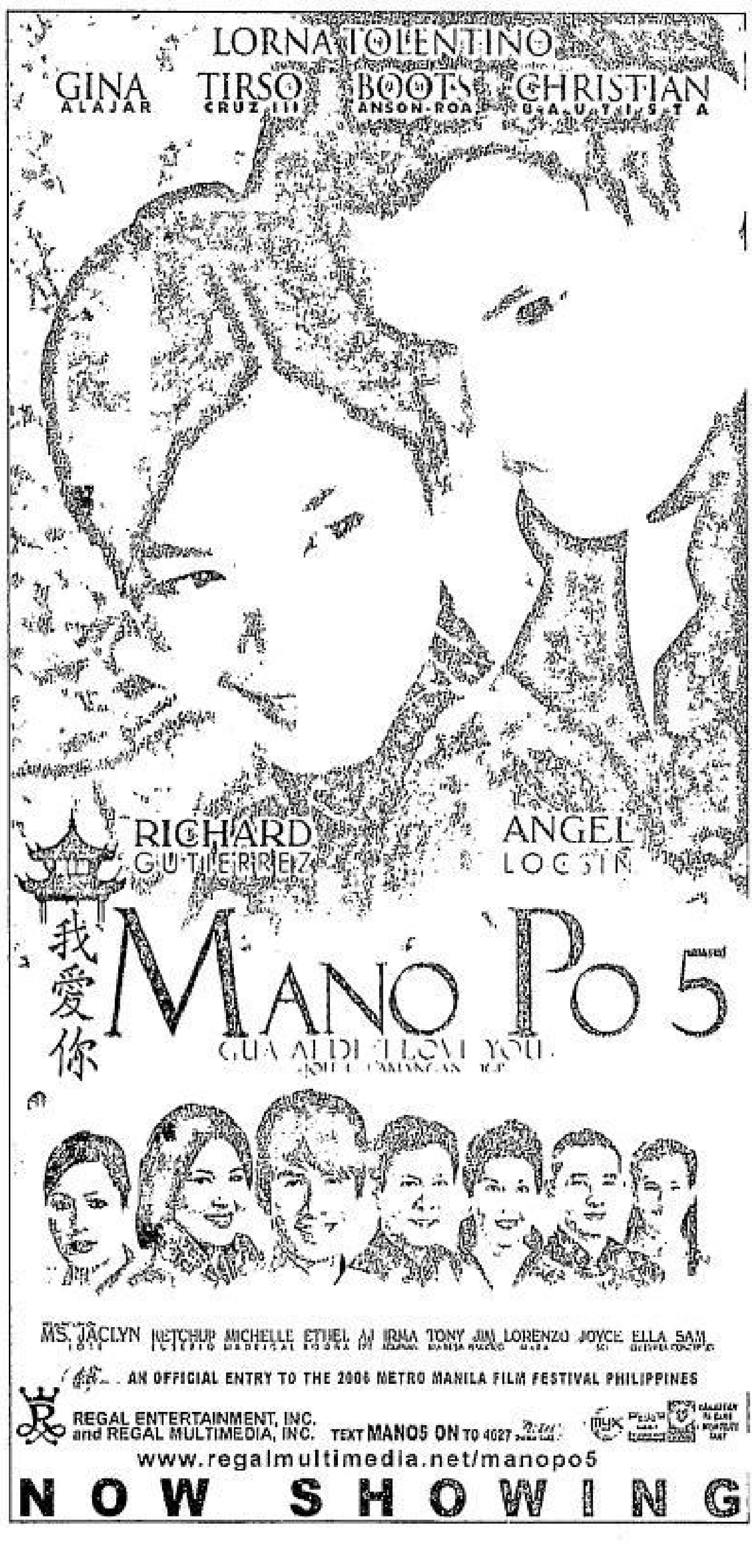
Rated "A" by Cinema Evaluation Board
MTRCB RATING R-13 Strictly for 13 years of age and up
CESAR MONTANO
OFFICIAL ENTRY TO METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2006
ER 25, 2006
SUNSHINE CRUZ
CELIA RODRIGUEZ
JOHNNY DELGADO
LIGALIG
DR. MANNY CALAYAN
CM FILMS INC.
CESAR MONTANO
CM FILMS INC
Hanford
CALAYAN
XXI FOREVER

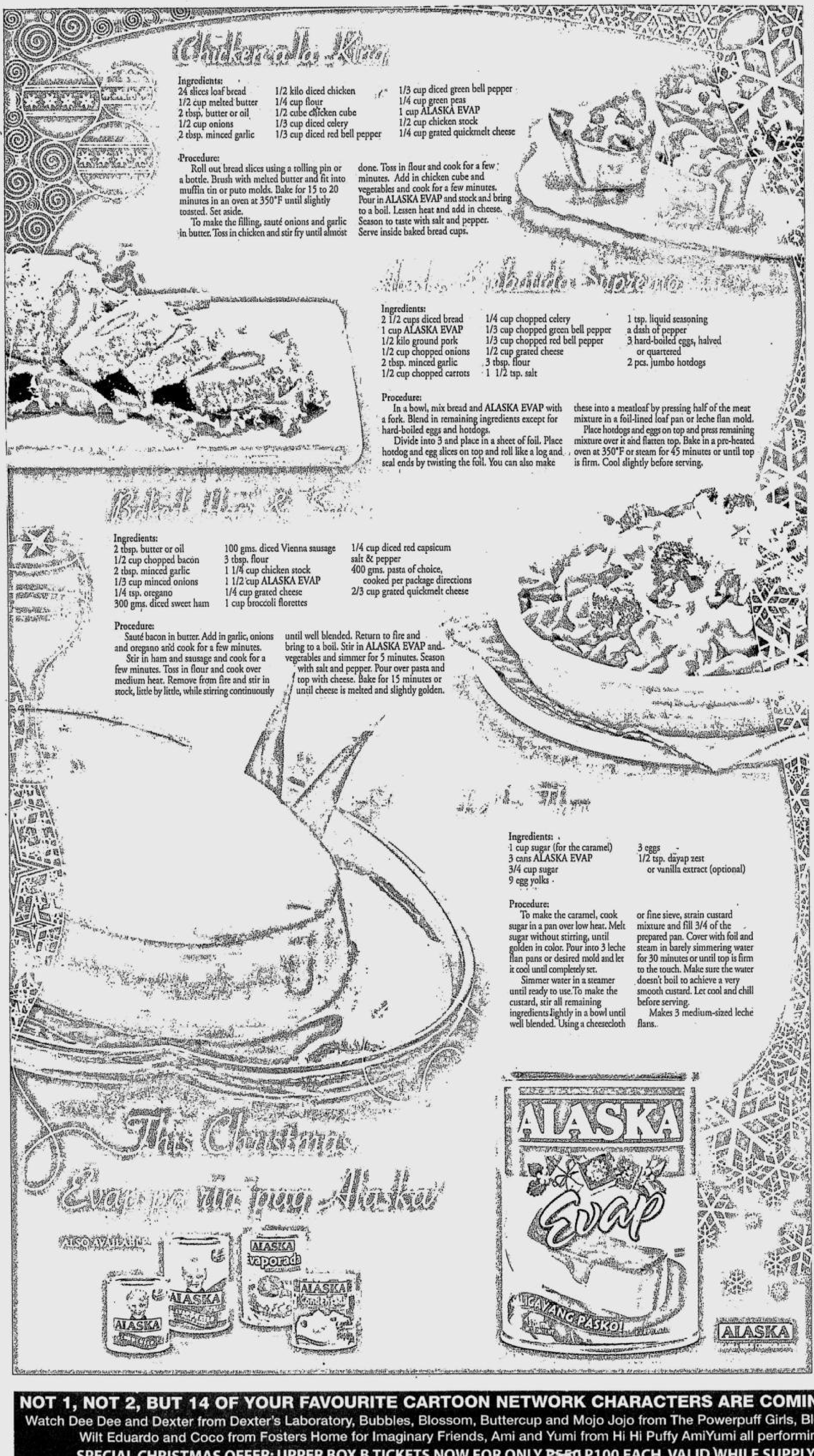

SHERYL
MANILYN
KEEMPEE
IZA
BEARWIN
KEANNA
JL
NASH
EUGENE
ROXANNE
JOSEPH
MIKO
SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 8
TEXT SHAKE ON 4627
REGAL ENTERTAINMENT, INC.
REGAL MULTIMEDIA, INC.
PG-13
NOW SHOWING

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
THEATRE MALL
CINEMA 1 LIGALIG R-13
CINEMA 2 ZHA-ZHA ZATURNAH GP
PROMENADE
CINEMA 3 3 BARAHA PG-13
CINEMA 4 MANO PO GP
CINEMA 5 SUPER NOYPI GP
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES CALL: 722-4496
MUSIC MUSEUM
DEC 27, 2006 Kyla "Give Love On Christmas Day" 8:00 PM
DEC 28, 2006 Truefaith, Mojofly, Gun Firenze 8:30 PM
TEATRINO
EVERY MONDAY DANCE NIGHT 7:00PM
DEC. 23, 2006 Mishka Adams 9:00 PM
Jan. 16, 23, 30, 2007 Dyords Ko Po 8:30 PM
FOR INQUIRIES PLS CALL 722-4532 LOC 116
PROMENADE GREENHILLS
FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION PLS. CALL 721-6726 OR 721-0435

Pops Fernandez
Rustom Padilla
Alfred VARGAS
Pauleen LUNA
Chokoleit
Christian VAZQUEZ
Say ALONZO
and Zsa Zsa Padilla
Carlo Vergara's
ZSAZSA ZATURNNAH
ZE MOVEEH
TEXT ZSAZSA ON
REGAL ENTERTAINMENT, INC. and REGAL MULTIMEDIA, INC.
www.regalmultimedia.net/zaturnnah
NOW SHOWING

JOHN
SANDARA PARK
POLO RAVALES
KATRINA HALILI
JENNYLYN MERCADO
MARK HERRAS
SUPER NOYPI
AN OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE 2006 METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL PHILIPPINES
REGAL ENTERTAINMENT, INC. and REGAL MULTIMEDIA, INC.
www.supernoypi.com
PLDT
TEXT NOYPI ON TO 4622
NOW SHOWING


LORNA TOLENTINO
GINA ALAJAR
TIRSO CRUZ III
BOOTS ANSON-ROA
CHRISTIAN BAUTISTA
RICHARD GUTIERREZ
ANGEL LOCSIN
我愛你
MANO PO 5
GUA AI DI (I LOVE YOU)
MS. JACLYN JOSE
KETCHUP EUSEBIO
MICHELLE MADRIGAL
ETHEL BOOBA
AJ
IRMA
TONY
JIM
LORENZO
JOYCE
ELLA
SAM
AN OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE 2006 METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL PHILIPPINES
REGAL ENTERTAINMENT, INC. and REGAL MULTIMEDIA, INC.
TEXT MANO5 ON TO 4027
www.regalmultimedia.net/manopo5
NOW SHOWING



[illegible]

Ingredients:
24 slices loaf bread
1/2 cup melted butter
2 tbsp. butter or oil
1/2 cup onions
2 tbsp. minced garlic
1/2 kilo diced chicken
1/4 cup flour
1/2 cube chicken cube
1/3 cup diced celery
1/3 cup diced red bell pepper
1/3 cup diced green bell pepper
1/4 cup green peas
1 cup ALASKA EVAP
1/2 cup chicken stock
1/4 cup grated quickmelt cheese

Procedure:

Roll out bread slices using a rolling pin or a bottle. Brush with melted butter and fit into muffin tin or puto molds. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes in an oven at 350°F until slightly toasted. Set aside.

To make the filling, sauté onions and garlic in butter. Toss in chicken and stir fry until almost done. Toss in flour and cook for a few minutes. Add in chicken cube and vegetables and cook for a few minutes. Pour in ALASKA EVAP and stock and bring to a boil. Lessen heat and add in cheese. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve inside baked bread cups.

[illegible]

Ingredients:
2 1/2 cups diced bread
1 cup ALASKA EVAP
1/2 kilo ground pork
1/2 cup chopped onions
2 tbsp. minced garlic
1/2 cup chopped carrots
1/4 cup chopped celery
1/3 cup chopped green bell pepper
1/3 cup chopped red bell pepper
1/2 cup grated cheese
3 tbsp. flour
1 1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. liquid seasoning
a dash of pepper
3 hard-boiled eggs, halved or quartered
2 pcs. jumbo hotdogs

Procedure:

In a bowl, mix bread and ALASKA EVAP with a fork. Blend in remaining ingredients except for hard-boiled eggs and hotdogs.

Divide into 3 and place in a sheet of foil. Place hotdog and egg slices on top and roll like a log and seal ends by twisting the foil. You can also make these into a meatloaf by pressing half of the meat mixture in a foil-lined loaf pan or leche flan mold.

Place hotdogs and eggs on top and press remaining mixture over it and flatten top. Bake in a pre-heated oven at 350°F or steam for 45 minutes or until top is firm. Cool slightly before serving.

[illegible]

Ingredients:
2 tbsp. butter or oil
1/2 cup chopped bacon
2 tbsp. minced garlic
1/3 cup minced onions
1/4 tsp. oregano
300 gms. diced sweet ham
100 gms. diced Vienna sausage
3 tbsp. flour
1 1/4 cup chicken stock
1 1/2 cup ALASKA EVAP
1/4 cup grated cheese
1 cup broccoli florettes
1/4 cup diced red capsicum
salt & pepper
400 gms. pasta of choice, cooked per package directions
2/3 cup grated quickmelt cheese

Procedure:

Sauté bacon in butter. Add in garlic, onions and oregano and cook for a few minutes.

Stir in ham and sausage and cook for a few minutes. Toss in flour and cook over medium heat. Remove from fire and stir in stock, little by little, while stirring continuously until well blended. Return to fire and bring to a boil. Stir in ALASKA EVAP and vegetables and simmer for 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Pour over pasta and top with cheese. Bake for 15 minutes or until cheese is melted and slightly golden.

[illegible]

Ingredients:
1 cup sugar (for the caramel)
3 cans ALASKA EVAP
3/4 cup sugar
9 egg yolks
3 eggs
1/2 tsp. dayap zest or vanilla extract (optional)

Procedure:

To make the caramel, cook sugar in a pan over low heat. Melt sugar without stirring, until golden in color. Pour into 3 leche flan pans or desired mold and let it cool until completely set.

Simmer water in a steamer until ready to use. To make the custard, stir all remaining ingredients lightly in a bowl until well blended. Using a cheesecloth or fine sieve, strain custard mixture and fill 3/4 of the prepared pan. Cover with foil and steam in barely simmering water for 30 minutes or until top is firm to the touch. Make sure the water doesn't boil to achieve a very smooth custard. Let cool and chill before serving.

Makes 3 medium-sized leche flans.

This Christmas,
[illegible]

ALSO AVAILABLE

ALASKA
Evap
LIGAYANG PASKO!
ALASKA
ALASKA
ALASKA
ALASKA Evaporada
ALASKA

AI-AI DE LAS ALAS RODEL ROTONI

Ai-Ai who has (almost) everything

She juggles the roles of comedy concert queen, 'Halimaw sa Banga' and 'Tanging Ina' with characteristic kookiness

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

RIGHT AFTER DOING GLOria Estefan's "Conga" at the INQUIRER's Employee's Service Awards rites, comedienne Ai-Ai de las Alas casually announces that her next appointment is a PTA meeting in son Nicolo's school.

The irony isn't lost on her.

"I'll be doing the 'Conga' later in front of my son's teachers," Ai-Ai cracks.

That, in a nutshell, is her life at the moment, she says.

Juggling various roles has always been par for the course for Ai-Ai.

These days, she's "busy-busy-*han*," shuttling between two ABS-CBN shows "Love Spell" and "Super Inggo."

In the former, she portrays a Scrooge who suddenly becomes generous. In the latter, she takes over the villainess role Bugan of "Halimaw sa Banga" fame.

According to "Inggo" director Malu Sevilla, the comedienne chose the *contravida* role "because she wanted to do something different after the heavy-drama soap 'Bituing Walang Ningning.'"

"I knew it was a meaty role because in the original 'Halimaw,' Maritess Gutierrez was so good," Ai-Ai relates. In fact, Gutierrez won Best Supporting Actress at the 1986 Metro Manila Film Festival for the same role.

She points out that "Inggo" is a good move for her: "It's doing well because it's for kids and very *masa*." She herself has always targeted the kiddie and *masa* markets, she says.

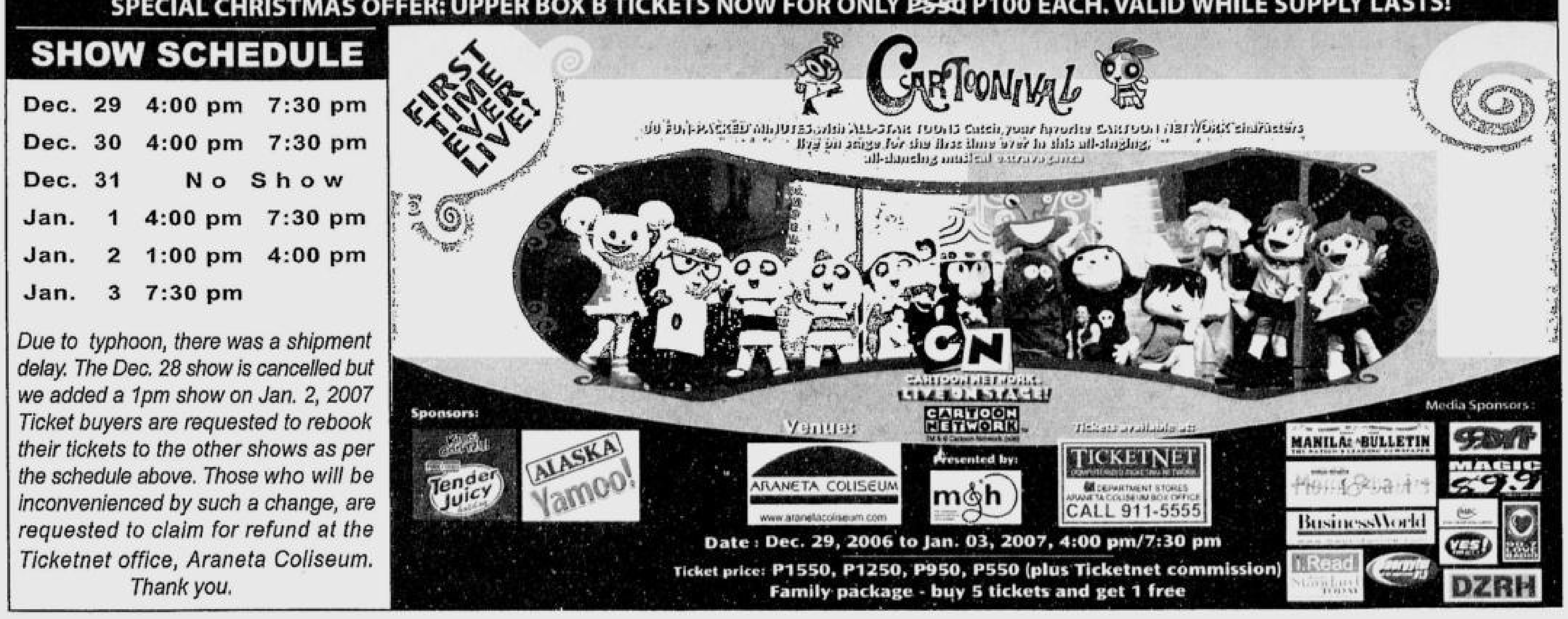
Apart from TV shows, Ai-Ai has a string of concerts slated here and abroad. "I'm leaving for Dubai and Abu Dhabi. I'm also preparing for a major concert, my third at the Araneta Coliseum, next year."

She explains that her Big Dome concert didn't push through this year because she was tied down by the soap "Bituin" and the Bong Revilla movie, "Kapag Tumibok ang Puso."

Next year, she has two big-screen projects—"Cute ang Ina Mo" for Star Cinema/Viva and "Ang Kabit at ang Caviteña" for Imus.

In "Cute," she portrays the mom of Anne Curtis who falls in love with her adoptive brother Luis Manzano.

In "Kabit," she plays the mistress "for a change and the real wife will be Mega (Sharon Cuneta)."



NOT 1, NOT 2, BUT 14 OF YOUR FAVOURITE CARTOON NETWORK CHARACTERS ARE COMING TO TOWN.
Watch Dee Dee and Dexter from Dexter's Laboratory, Bubbles, Blossom, Buttercup and Mojo Jojo from The Powerpuff Girls, Blooreguard, Mac, Wilt Eduardo and Coco from Fosters Home for Imaginary Friends, Ami and Yumi from Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi all performing live!
SPECIAL CHRISTMAS OFFER: UPPER BOX B TICKETS NOW FOR ONLY ~~P550~~ P100 EACH. VALID WHILE SUPPLY LASTS!

SHOW SCHEDULE

Dec.	29	4:00 pm	7:30 pm
Dec.	30	4:00 pm	7:30 pm
Dec.	31	No Show	
Jan.	1	4:00 pm	7:30 pm
Jan.	2	1:00 pm	4:00 pm
Jan.	3	7:30 pm	

Due to typhoon, there was a shipment delay. The Dec. 28 show is cancelled but we added a 1pm show on Jan. 2, 2007 Ticket buyers are requested to rebook their tickets to the other shows as per the schedule above. Those who will be inconvenienced by such a change, are requested to claim for refund at the Ticketnet office, Araneta Coliseum. Thank you.

FIRST TIME EVER LIVE!

CARTOONIVAL

Sponsors:
Venue: ARANETA COLISEUM www.aranetacoliseum.com
Presented by: mgh
Tickets available at: TICKETNET DEPARTMENT STORES ARANETA COLISEUM BOX OFFICE CALL 911-5555
Media Sponsors:

Date : Dec. 29, 2006 to Jan. 03, 2007, 4:00 pm/7:30 pm
Ticket price: P1550, P1250, P950, P550 (plus Ticketnet commission)
Family package - buy 5 tickets and get 1 free